THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 14

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

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SAINT AUGUSTINE

THE CITY OF GOD

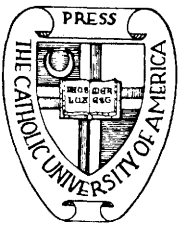
BOOKS VIII-XVI

Translated by

GERALD G. WALSH, S.J.

and

GRACE MONAHAN, O.S.U.



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OF
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VOLUME 7

SAINT AUGUSTINE

THE CITY OF GOD

BOOKS VIII-XVI

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33 On the granddaughter of Nachor, Rebecca, whom Isaac took for his wife 548
34 On the significance of the fact that, when Sara was dead, Abraham took Cetura for his wife 548
35 The prophetic sense of God's declaration concerning the twins who were still in Rebecca's womb 550
36 On the divine communication and blessing which Isaac received no less than his father, because, on account of his father, God loved him 551
37 On the truths mysteriously foreshadowed in the lives of Esau and Jacob 553
38 How Jacob was sent to Mesopotamia in search of a wife, had a vision in a dream on the way, and won four wives by wooing one 555
39 How it came about that Jacob was also called Israel . 558
40 On reconciling the narrative of Jacob's going to Egypt with the fact that, of the seventy-five who are said to have accompanied him, several were at that time not even born 559
41 On the blessing which Jacob uttered over his son Juda 561
42 On the sons of Joseph who were blessed by Jacob, whose refusal to change hands had a prophetical significance 563
43 On the history of the Jews in the period of Moses and Josue, the son of Nave, and in that of the Judges and Kings who followed them; of these Kings, Saul was the first but David the most significant by reason of both his symbolical and his historical role . . . 564

BOOK EIGHT

Chapter 1

I MUST NOW TURN to a matter which calls for much deeper thought than was needed to resolve the issues raised in the previous Books. I mean natural theology. Unlike the poetical theology of the stage which flaunts the crimes of the gods and the political theology of the city which publicizes their evil desires, and both of which reveal them as dangerous demons rather than deities, natural theology cannot be discussed with men in the street but only with philosophers, that is, as the name implies, with lovers of wisdom.[1]

I may add that, since divine truth and scripture clearly teach us that God, the Creator of all things, is Wisdom, a true philosopher will be a lover of God. That does not mean that all who answer to the name are really in love with genuine wisdom, for it is one thing to be and another to be called a philosopher. And, therefore, from all the philosophers whose teachings I have learned from books I shall select only those with whom it would not be improper to discuss this subject.

I shall not bother in this work to refute all the errors of all the philosophers, but only such as pertain to theology—which term from its Greek derivation I take to mean a study of the divine nature. My only purpose is to challenge the opinions of those philosophers who, while admitting that there is a God

1 Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.3,8,9.

who concerns himself with human affairs, claim that, since the worship of this one unchangeable God is not sufficient to attain happiness even after death, lesser gods, admittedly created and directed by this supreme God, should also be reverenced.

I must say that such philosophers were nearer to the truth than Varro was.[2] His idea of natural theology embraced at most the universe and the world-soul. They, on the contrary, acknowledged a God who transcends the nature of every kind of soul, a God who created the visible cosmos of heaven and earth, and the spirit of every living creature, and who, by the communication of His own immutable and immaterial light, makes blessed the kind of rational and intellectual soul which man possesses.

Even the most superficial student will recognize in these men the Platonic philosophers, so named after their master, Plato.[3] I shall speak briefly about Plato's ideas, in so far as they are relevant to the matter in hand, but first I must review the opinions of his predecessors in the field of philosophy.

Chapter 2

The legacy of literature written in the universally admired Greek language records two schools of philosophy. They are, first, the Italian, established in that part of Italy formerly known as Magna Graecia; and second, the Ionian, in that country which is now called Greece. Pythagoras of Samos[1] is said to be the founder of the Italian school and also the originator of the word philosophy. Before his time, any person of outstanding achievement was called a sage. But when

2 Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 B.C.); cf. *City of God* 6.2.
3 *c.*428-*c.*348 B.C.

1 582-*c.*507 B.C.

Pythagoras, who considered it arrogance to call one's self wise, was asked his profession, he replied that he was a philosopher, that is to say, a man in pursuit of, or in love with, wisdom.

Thales of Miletus,[2] who initiated the Ionian School, was one of the celebrated Seven Wise Men. While the remaining six were distinguished by balanced lives and moral teachings, Thales took up the study of nature and committed the results of his researches to writing. He won particular applause by his mastery of astronomical calculations and by his predictions of solar and lunar eclipses.[3] His deliberate purpose in this was to found a school that would survive him. His main theory was that the primary stuff of all things is water, and that from this principle originated the elements, the cosmos and everything which the world produced. As far as he was concerned, nothing of all this universe, so marvelous to gaze upon, was directed by divine intelligence.

His disciple and successor, Anaximander,[4] proposed a new cosmological theory. For him, there could be no one ultimate element of all things such as water; rather, each thing is derived from principles of its own. Hence, he held, the number of principles is infinite, and from these arise uncounted worlds and all that they produce. And, in an endless succession of dissolution and becoming, no one world endures longer than its period permits. Like Thales, he found no place for any divine direction in the processes of nature.

Anaximander's disciple, Anaximenes,[5] believed that all cosmic energy is derived from air, which he considered infinite. He neither denied nor ignored the gods; nevertheless, he taught that they were creatures of the air and not its

2 *c.*624-*c.*548 B.C.
3 Thales' knowledge of astronomy is recorded by Aristotle, *Politics* 1.11.8-10, and by Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.49,111.
4 *c.*611-547 B.C.
5 6th cent. B.C.

creators. His pupil, Anaxagoras,[6] realizing that divine spirit was the cause of all visible things, held that the divine mind, using infinite matter, consisting of unlike particles, made each particular thing out of its own kind of like particles.

Diogenes,[7] another follower of Anaximenes, held that air was the ultimate element of all things, but that nothing could be produced from it without the agency of the divine reason, which permeated it. Anaxagoras was followed by his pupil Archelaus.[8] He, too, asserted that everything in the universe was composed of like particles, which, however, were informed by intelligence. This mind, by causing the conjunction and dissolution of the eternal bodies or particles, was the source of all movements. Archelaus is said to have taught Socrates,[9] the master of Plato. This brief review has been but a preparation for the discussion of Plato's philosophy.

Chapter 3

To Socrates goes the credit of being the first one to channel the whole of philosophy into an ethical system for the reformation and regulation of morals.[1] His predecessors without exception had applied themselves particularly to physics or natural science. I do not think that it can be definitely decided just why Socrates chose to follow this course. It has been suggested that he did so because he had become wearied of obscure and uncertain investigations, and preferred to turn his mind to a clean-cut objective, to that secret of human hap-

6 *c.*500-428 B.C.
7 5th cent. B.C.
8 5th cent. B.C.
9 469-399 B.C.

1 Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.4,10.

piness which seems to have been the sole purpose of all philosophical research. Others have claimed, more kindly, that he did not think it right for minds darkened with earthly desires to reach out beyond their limits to the realm of the divine.

Socrates realized that his predecessors had been seeking the origin of all things, but he believed that these first and highest causes could be found only in the will of the single and supreme Divinity and, therefore, could be comprehended only by a mind purified from passion. Hence his conclusion, that he must apply himself to the acquisition of virtue, so that his mind, freed from the weight of earthly desires, might, by its own natural vigor, lift itself up to eternal realities and, with purified intelligence, contemplate the very nature of that immaterial and immutable light in which the causes[2] of all created natures abidingly dwell. Nevertheless, with his marvelous combination of wit and words, pungency and politeness, and with his trick of confessing ignorance and concealing knowledge he used to tease and poke fun at the folly of ignoramuses who talked as though they knew the answers to those moral problems in which he seemed wholly absorbed.

The result was that he incurred their enmity. He was falsely accused and condemned to death. However, the very city of Athens that had publicly condemned him began publicly to mourn his loss, and the wrath of the people was so turned against his two accusers that one[3] of them was killed by an angry mob and the other[4] escaped a similar death only by voluntary and perpetual exile.

Socrates was thus so highly distinguished both in life and in death that he left behind him numerous disciples. They rivaled one another in zealous discussions of those ethical

2 Plato speaks of his 'ideas' as causes; cf., e.g., *Phaedo,* p. 100.
3 Meletus, prosecutor in the trial of Socrates.
4 Anytus, the politician who remained in the background but instigated Meletus to carry on the prosecution.

problems where there is question of the supreme good and, hence, of human happiness.

In his discussions, Socrates had a way of proposing and defending his theories and then demolishing them. No one could make out exactly what he believed. Consequently, each of his followers picked what he preferred and sought the supreme good in his heart's desire.

Now the truth is that the supreme good is that which, when attained, makes all men happy. Yet, so varied in regard to this good were the views of the Socratics that is seems hardly credible that all of them were followers of one and the same master. Some, like Aristippus,[5] claimed that pleasure was the highest good; others, like Antisthenes,[6] virtue. The men and their views are so numerous and varied that is would be irksome to mention them all.

Chapter 4

Of the pupils of Socrates, Plato was so remarkable for his brillance that he has deservedly outshone all the rest. He was born in Athens of a good family and by his marvelous ability easily surpassed all his fellow disciples. Realizing, however, that neither his own genius nor Socratic training was adequate to evolve a perfect system of philosophy, he traveled far and wide to wherever there was any hope of gaining some valuable addition to knowledge. Thus, in Egypt he mastered the lore which was there esteemed. From there he went to lower Italy, famous for the Pythagorean School, and there successfully imbibed from eminent teachers all that was then in vogue in Italian philosophy.

5 *c.*435-*c.*366 B.C.
6 *c.*445-*c.*365 B.C.

However, Plato's special affection was for his old master—so much so that in practically all the Dialogues he makes Socrates, with all his charm, the mouthpiece not only of his own moral arguments but of all that Plato learned from others or managed to discover himself.

Now, the pursuit of wisdom follows two avenues—action and contemplation. Thus, one division of philosophy may be called active; the other part, contemplative. The former deals with the conduct of life; that is to say, with the cultivation of morals. Contemplative philosophy considers natural causality and truth as such. Socrates excelled in practical wisdom; Pythagoras favored contemplation, and to this he applied his whole intelligence.

It is to Plato's praise that he combined both in a more perfect philosophy, and then divided the whole into three parts: first, moral philosophy which pertains to action; second, natural philosophy whose purpose is contemplation; third, rational philosophy which discriminates between truth and error.[1] Although this last is necessary for both action and contemplation, it is contemplation especially which claims to reach a vision of the truth. Hence, this threefold division in no way invalidates the distinction whereby action and contemplation are considered the constituent elements of the whole of philosophy. Just what Plato's position was in each of these three divisions—that is to say, just what he knew or believed to be the end of all action, the cause of all nature, the light of all reason—I think it would be rash to affirm and would take too long to discuss at length.

Plato was so fond of following the well-known habit of his master of dissimulating his knowledge or opinions that in Plato's own works (where Socrates appears as a speaker) it is difficult to determine just what views he held even on im-

1 Cf. Cicero, *Acad. Post.* 1.5,19-21.

portant questions. However, of the views which are set forth in his writings, whether his own or those of others which seemed to have pleased him, a few must be recalled and included here. In some places, Plato is on the side of the true religion which our faith accepts and defends. At other times he seems opposed; for example, on the respective merits of monotheism and polytheism in relation to genuine beatitude after death.

Perhaps this may be said of the best disciples of Plato—of those who followed most closely and understood most clearly the teachings of a master rightly esteemed above all other pagan philosophers—that they have perceived, at least, these truths about God: that in Him is to be found the cause of all being, the reason of all thinking, the rule of all living. The first of these truths belongs to natural, the second to rational, the third to moral philosophy.

Now, if man was created so that by his highest faculty he might attain to the highest of all realities, that is, to the one, true and supreme God, apart from whom no nature exists, no teaching is true, no conduct is good, then let us seek Him in whom all we find is real, know Him in whom all we contemplate is true, love Him in whom all things for us are good.

Chapter 5

If, then, Plato defined a philosopher as one who knows, loves and imitates the God in whom he finds his happiness, there is little need to examine further. For, none of the other philosophers has come so close to us as the Platonists have,[1] and, therefore, we may neglect the others. Take for example, the theology of the stage. It beguiles the minds of the pagans

1 Cf. St. Augustine, *De vera religione* 7.

with the crimes of the gods. Or, take political theology, according to which impure demons under the name of gods seduce the populace who are slaves of earthly pleasures, and demand human errors as divine honors for themselves. They excite in their worshipers an impure passion to watch the demons sinning on the stage as though this were an act of worship, and they are even more satisfied than the spectators with the plays that exhibit their human passions. Proper as such rites may seem in places of worship, they are debased by connection with the obscenity of the theatres; while the filth of the stage loses its foulness by comparison with the rites that take place in the temples.

Nor is the theology of Varro any better in its interpretation of these rites as symbolic of heaven and earth and the origins and movements of mortal affairs. The fact is, they do not denote what he tries to insinuate. His fancy gets the better of the truth. And, even were he right, it would still be wrong for a rational soul to worship as a god something which, in the order of nature, is in a lower category or to submit as to gods to those very things over which the true God has put men in charge.

Finally, the Platonic theology is superior to those revealing writings about the sacred rites which Numa Pompilius[2] had buried with himself in order to hide them and which, when turned up by a plough, the Senate ordered to be burned. And to do justice to Numa, we should include in this class the letter that Alexander of Macedon[3] wrote to his mother, telling her what had been revealed to him by Leo, an Egyptian high priest, to the effect that all the gods, major as well as minor, were nothing more than mortal men—not only Picus and Faunus, Aeneas and Romulus, Hercules and Aesculapius,

2 Cf. above, 7.34.
3 Cf. below, 8.27; 12.11.

Bacchus, son of Semele, the twin sons of Tyndareus,[4] and such like mortals who are reckoned as gods, but even the greater gods whom Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations*[5] alludes to without mentioning their names; that is, Jupiter, Juno, Saturn, Vulcan, Vesta, and many others whom Varro attempts to identify with the parts or elements of the world. Fearful that he had revealed a great mystery, Leo begged Alexander to have his mother burn the message conveyed to her.

Certainly, all such fancies of both the mythical and civil theologies should yield to the Platonists who acknowledged the true God as the author of being, the light of truth and the giver of blessedness. So, too, those philosophers, the materialists who believe that the ultimate principles of nature are corporeal, should yield to those great men who had knowledge of so great a God. Such were Thales, who found the cause and principle of things in water, Anaximenes in air, the Stoics in fire, Epicurus[6] in atoms, that is, minute indivisible and imperceptible corpuscles. And so of the rest, whose names it is needless to mention, who maintained that bodies, simple or compound, animate or inanimate, but nevertheless material, were the root of all reality.

The Epicureans, for example, believed that life could be produced from lifeless matter. Others taught that both animate and inanimate things derive from a living principle but that this principle must be as material as the things themselves. The Stoics claimed that fire, one of the four material elements of this visible world, had life and intelligence, that it was the creator of the universe and all within it; in fact, that it was God.

4 Castor and Pollux.
5 1.13,29.
6 341-270 B.C.

Now, philosophers of this type could think only about such matters as their sense-bound minds suggested to them. Yet they have within themselves something they have never seen and they can see in their imagination, without looking at it, an external object which they have previously seen. Now, whatever can be so imagined in the mind's eye is certainly not a body but only the likeness of a body, and that power of the mind which can perceive this likeness is itself neither a body nor an image of a body. Moreover, that faculty which perceives and judges whether this likeness is beautiful or ugly is certainly superior to the object judged.

Now, this faculty is a man's reason, the essence of his rational soul, which is certainly not material, since the likeness of a body which is seen and judged in the mind of a thinking person is not material. The soul, then, cannot be one of the four elements out of which the visible, material cosmos is composed—earth, water, air, and fire. And if our mind is not material, how can God the Creator of the soul be material?

As I said before, let all such philosophers give place to the Platonists. That goes for those, too, who were ashamed to acknowledge a material god, yet thought that men's souls were of the same nature as His—so little were they moved by the fact of a mutability in the soul that it would be unthinkable to attribute to the nature of God. Their answer to this difficulty was that the soul is unalterable in itself but is affected by the body. They might as well have said that the flesh is wounded because of the body, but in itself is invulnerable. The fact is that what is immutable can be changed by nothing. But, if a thing can be changed by a body, it can be changed by something and, therefore, cannot rightly be called immutable.

Chapter 6

The Platonic philosophers, then, so deservedly considered superior to all the others in reputation and achievement, well understood that no body could be God and, therefore, in order to find Him, they rose beyond all material things. Convinced that no mutable reality could be the Most High, they transcended every soul and spirit subject to change in their search for God. They perceived that no determining form by which any mutable being is what it is—whatever be the reality, mode or nature of that form—could have any existence apart from Him who truly exists because His existence is immutable.

From this it follows that neither the whole universe, with its frame, figures, qualities and ordered movement, all the elements and bodies arranged in the heavens and on earth, nor any life—whether merely nourishing and preserving as in trees, or both vegetative and sensitive as in animals, or which is also intellectual as in man, or which needs no nourishment but merely preserves, feels and knows as in angels—can have existence apart from Him whose existence is simple and indivisible. For, in God, being is not one thing and living another—as though He could be and not be living. Nor in God is it one thing to live and another to understand—as though He could live without understanding. Nor in Him is it one thing to know and another to be blessed—as though He could know and not be blessed. For, in God, to live, to know, to be blessed is one and the same as to be.

The Platonists have understood that God, by reason of His immutability and simplicity, could not have been produced from any existing thing, but that He Himself made all those things that are. They argued that whatever exists is either matter or life; that life is superior to matter; that the

appearance of a body is sensible, whereas the form of life is intelligible. Hence, they preferred intelligible form to sensible appearance. We call things sensible which can be perceived by sight and bodily touch.

If there is any loveliness discerned in the lineaments of the body, or beauty in the movement of music and song, it is the mind that makes this judgment. This means that there must be within the mind a superior form, one that is immaterial and independent of sound and space and time. However, the mind itself is not immutable, for, if it were, all minds would judge alike concerning sensible forms. Actually, a clever mind judges more aptly than the stupid one; a skilled one better than one unskilled; an experienced one better than one inexperienced. Even the same mind, once it improves, judges better than it did before.

Undoubtedly, anything susceptible of degrees is mutable, and for this reason, the most able, learned and experienced philosophers readily concluded that the first form of all could not be in any of these things in which the form was clearly mutable. Once they perceived various degrees of beauty in both body and mind, they realized that, if all form were lacking, their very existence would end. Thus, they argued that there must be some reality in which the form was ultimate, immutable and, therefore, not susceptible of degrees. They rightly concluded that only a reality unmade from which all other realities originate could be the ultimate principle of things.

So that what is known about God, God Himself manifested to them, since 'his invisible attributes are clearly seen by them—his everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made.'[1] By Him, also all

1 Rom. 1.19-20.

visible and temporal things were created. Enough has been said, I think, concerning what the Platonists call physical or natural philosophy.

Chapter 7

As for the second part of philosophy, logic or rational philosphy, the Platonists are beyond all comparison with those who taught that the criterion of truth is in the bodily senses, and who would have us believe that all knowledge is to be measured and ruled by such doubtful and deceitful testimony. I mean the Epicureans and even the Stoics. For all their passion for adroitness in disputation or, as they would say, dialectics, even this was reckoned a matter of sense perception. They maintained that it was by sensation that the mind conceived those notions (or *ennoiai* as they would say) which are needed for clear definitions and, hence, for the unification and communication of the whole system of learning and teaching.

When these philosophers quote their famous dictum that only the wise are beautiful, I often wonder by just what bodily senses they have perceived that beauty, by what kind of fleshy eyes they could have possibly beheld the form and fairness of wisdom.

Certainly, the Platonists, whom we rightly prefer to all others, were able to distinguish what is apprehended by the mind from what is experienced by the senses, without either denying or exaggerating the faculties of sense. As for that light of our minds by which all can be learned, that, they declared, was the very God by whom all things were made.

Chapter 8

The final division is moral philosophy or, to use the Greek name, ethics. It deals with the supreme good, by reference to which all our actions are directed. It is the good we seek for itself and not because of something else and, once it is attained, we seek nothing further to make us happy. This, in fact, is why we call it our end, because other things are desired on account of this *summum bonum,* while it is desired purely for itself.

Now, some philosophers maintained that this happiness-giving good for man arises from the body; others claimed that it has its source in the soul; while a third group held that it derives from both.

All philosophers have realized that man is made up of body and soul and, therefore, that the possibility of his well-being must proceed either from one of these constituents or from both together, the final good, whereby man would be happy, being the one to which all human actions would be referred and beyond which they would seek nothing to which it might be referred.

Hence, those who are said to have added to the list of goods the 'extrinsic' good—such as honor, glory, wealth and so on—did not mean this as though it were a supreme good to be sought for its own sake, but merely as a relative good and one that was good for good men but bad for the wicked.

Thus, those who sought for human good either in man's body or in his mind or in both did not think they had to search outside of man himself to find it. Only those who looked to the body sought it in man's lower nature; those who looked to the soul, in man's higher nature; and the others, in man as a whole; but in every case they sought it only in man himself.

This threefold division of opinion concerning the *summum bonum* resulted, not in three, but in a multitude of philosophical sects and dissensions because of the varying views as to what constituted the good of the body, the good of the soul and the good of the whole man.

The definers of all these defective conclusions should yield to those philosophers who taught that man is never fully blessed, in the enjoyment of either corporal or spiritual good, but only by a fruition in God. This joy in God is not like any pleasure found in physical or intellectual satisfaction. Nor is it such as a friend experiences in the presence of a friend. But, if we are to use any such analogy, it is more like the eye rejoicing in light. Elsewhere, with God's help I shall try to explain the nature of this analogy. For the moment, let it suffice to recall the doctrine of Plato that a virtuous life is the ultimate end of man and that only those attain to it who know and imitate God and find their blessedness wholly in this. Consequently, Plato did not hesitate to say that to philosophize is to love that God whose nature is incorporeal.

From this we infer that the pursuer of wisdom, that is, the philosopher, will only be truly happy when he begins to rejoice in God. Certainly, not every one who delights in what he loves is always blessed, for many are unhappy in loving things they should not love and still more wretched once they begin to enjoy them. On the other hand, no one is really happy until his love ends in fruition. For, even those who love what they should not love do not consider loving but only fruition as the source of their satisfaction.

Who, then, but the very sorriest of persons would deny that a man is really happy who finds fruition in what he loves when what he loves is his true and highest good? Now, for Plato, this true and highest good was God, and, therefore, he calls a philosopher a lover of God, implying that philosophy

is a hunt for happiness which ends only when a lover of God reaches fruition in God.

Chapter 9

Philosophers, therefore, of whatever sort who have believed that the true and supreme God is the cause of created things, and the light by which they are known and the good toward which our actions are directed, and that He is the source from which our nature has its origin, our learning truth, our life its happiness—all these we prefer to others and recognize them as our neighbors. It does not matter whether they call themselves—as, perhaps, they should—Platonists, or whether they give their school some other name. Nor need we enquire whether it was only the leaders of the Ionian School—like Plato and his best disciples—who were teachers of these truths, or whether we should include the Italians on account of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans and, perhaps, others of similar views. For all I know, there may have been men reckoned as wise men or philosophers in other parts of the world who shared these views and doctrines—Atlantic Libyans, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Gauls, and Spaniards.

Chapter 10

Doubtless, it could happen that a Christian, well versed in ecclesiastical literature, might not be familiar with the name of Platonists nor even know that among Greek-speaking people two distinct schools of philosophy have flourished: the

Ionian and the Italian. Nevertheless, he is not so naive as not to know that philosophers look upon themselves as the lovers, if not the possessors, of wisdom; and he is on his guard against materialistic philosophers, who give no thought to the Creator of the world.

The Christian heeds carefully the apostolic admonition which says: 'See to it that no one deceives you by philosophy and vain deceit . . . according to the elements of the world.'[1] But the same Apostle tells him not to decry all as materialistic philosophers, for of some he says: 'What may be known about God is manifest to them. For God has manifested it to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen—his everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made.'[2] And again, speaking to the Athenians, after the magnificent remark about God which so few can appreciate, namely, that 'in Him we live and move and have our being,' he went on to add: 'as indeed some of your own [poets] have said.'[3]

The Christian knows, of course, how to distrust the doctrines of even these latter where they are wrong. Thus, the very Scripture which says that God manifested His invisible attributes to be seen and understood also says that they failed to worship the true God rightly because they rendered to creatures divine honors that were due to Him alone. 'Although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened. For while professing to be wise, they have become fools, and they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and

1 Col. 2.8.
2 Rom. 1.19-20.
3 Acts 17.28.

creeping things.'[4] Here the Apostle has in mind the Romans, Greeks and Egyptians, all boastful of their renown for wisdom.

This is a matter that I intend to debate with these philosophers later on.[5] Yet we prefer them to all others inasmuch as they agree with us concerning one God, the Creator of the universe, who is not only incorporeal, transcending all corporeal beings, but also incorruptible, surpassing every kind of soul—our source, our light, our goal.

Now, it may happen that the Christian has not studied the works of these philosophers, nor learned to use their terms in disputation. He may not designate that part of philosophy which treats of the investigation of nature as natural (if he speaks Latin) or as physical (if Greek); nor that part which seeks the ways by which truth may be perceived as rational or logical; nor that part which treats of conduct, with the highest good which is to be sought and the supreme evil to be avoided, as moral or ethics. Nevertheless, he knows that from the one, true and infinitely good God we have a nature by which we were made in His image,[6] faith by which we know God and ourselves, and grace whereby we reach beatitude in union with God.

This, then, is the reason for preferring the Platonists to all other philosophers. While the others consumed time and talent in seeking the causes of things, and the right ways of learning and living, the Platonists, once they knew God, discovered where to find the cause by which the universe was made, the light by which all truth is seen, the fountain from which true happiness flows.

If philosophers, then, whether Platonists or wise men of any nation whatsoever, hold these truths concerning God, they

4 Rom. 1.21-23.
5 Cf. below, 8.26.
6 Gen. 1.26-27.

agree with us. However, I have preferred to plead this cause with the Platonists because I know their writings better. The Greeks, whose language is universally esteemed, have eloquently eulogized these writings. The Latins, captivated either by their fascination or their fame, have gladly studied them, and, by translating them into our own language, have added to them new light and luster.

Chapter 11

Some of our fellow Christians are astonished to learn that Plato had such ideas about God and to realize how close they are to the truths of our faith. Some even have been led to suppose that he was influenced by the Prophet Jeremias during his travels in Egypt or, at least, that he had access to the scriptural prophecies; and this opinion I followed in some of my writings.[1]

However, a careful calculation of dates according to historical chronology shows that Plato was born almost one hundred years after Jeremias prophesied, and that nearly sixty years intervened between Plato's death at the age of eighty-one and the time when the Septuagint translation was begun. Ptolemy, King of Egypt,[2] it will be remembered, asked that the Hebraic prophecies be sent to him from Judea and he arranged to have them translated and safeguarded by seventy Hebrew scholars who were also experts in Greek.

Therefore, it follows that, while journeying in Egypt, Plato could not have seen Jeremias who was long since dead, nor could he have read the Scriptures which had not yet been

1 *De doctrina Christiana* 2.43. Augustine revokes his opinion as a slip of memory, *Retractationes* 2.4.
2 Ptolemy II (309-246 B.C.).

rendered into Greek, his native tongue. Of course, it is just possible that Plato, who was an indefatigable student and who used an interpreter to delve into Egyptian literature, may have done the same with the Scriputres. I do not mean to suggest that he undertook a translation of them. That was a feat which Ptolemy alone could accomplish by virtue of his liberality and of others' respect for his kingly power. But Plato could have learned from conversation the content of the Scriptures, without fully understanding their meaning.

Certain evidence favors this belief. For example, the first book of Genesis begins: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; the earth was waste and void; darkness covered the abyss, and the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.'[3] Plato in the *Timaeus,*[4] which deals with the origin of the world, says that in this work God first united earth and fire. Now it is clear that Plato locates fire in the heavens. His statement, therefore, bears a certain resemblance to the words: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

Plato also mentions two intermediary elements, water and air, by means of which the extremes, earth and fire, were united.[5] This idea, perhaps, originated from his interpretation of the verse: 'the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.' Paying little attention to the meaning which Scripture habitually ascribes to spirit and remembering that air is often called breath or spirit, Plato could easily have assumed that all four elements were mentioned in this text.

Then, too, Plato's definition of a philosopher—one who loves God—contains an idea which shines forth everywhere in Scripture. But the most palpable proof to my mind that

3 Gen. 1.1-2.
4 *Timaeus,* p. 31B.
5 *Ibid.,* p. 32B.

he was conversant with the sacred books is this, that when Moses, informed by an angel that God wished him to deliver the Hebrews from Egypt, questioned the angel concerning the name of the one who had sent him, the answer received was this: 'I AM WHO AM. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is, hath sent me to you,'[6] as though, in comparison with Him who, being immutable, truly is, all mutable things are as if they were not. Now, Plato had a passionate perception of this truth and was never tired of teaching it. Yet, I doubt whether this idea can be found in any of the works of Plato's predecessors except in the text: 'I AM WHO AM, and you shall say to them: He who is hath sent me to you.'

Chapter 12

Whether, then, Plato got his ideas from the works of earlier writers or, as seems more likely, in the way described in the words of the Apostle: 'Because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity,'[1] it seems to me that I have sufficiently justified my choice of the Platonic philosophers for the purpose of discussing this present problem in natural theology. The question is this: In order to secure happiness after death, should man worship a single God or many?

The main reason for selecting the Platonists is the superiority of their conceptions concernings one God, Creator of

6 Exod. 3.14.

1 Rom. 1.19-20.

heaven and earth, and, hence, their greater reputation in the judgment of posterity. It is true that Aristotle, a disciple of Plato, was a man of extraordinary genius and wide reputation (though in literary style inferior to Plato) who easily surpassed many others, and no less true that the Peripatetic school (so called from Aristotle's custom of teaching while walking) attracted many disciples even while his teacher, Plato, was alive. So, too, after the death of Plato, a son of his sister, Speusippus, and Xenocrates, Plato's favorite pupil, succeeded him in his Academy and, for this reason, they and their successors are called Academics. Nevertheless, the very best of the Platonists are those relatively recent philosophers who, refusing to be styled either Peripatetics or Academics, have called themselves Platonists.

Among these last are those highly distinguished Greek scholars, Plotinus,[2] Iamblichus[3] and Porphyry.[4] A hardly less notable Platonist was the African Apuleius,[5] who was a master of both Greek and Latin. All of these and many others of the same school, not to mention Plato himself, believed in polytheistic worship.

Chapter 13

In many other significant ways, these Platonists contradict our own convictions. However, I mean to cross-examine them concerning critical matter which I have just now mentioned. My question is: In their opinion, to which gods should worship be offered, to the good, or to the evil, or to both the

2 *c.*205-270; cf. below, 9.10.
3. Died *c.*330.
4 233-304.
5 Born *c.*125; cf. above, 4.2.

good and evil alike? We know what Plato thought regarding this.[1] He taught that all divinities are good and that none at all is bad. This being true, it follows that worship should be offered only to the good. This is another way of saying that rites should be rendered to the gods, for they would not be gods if they were not good.

If this be so—and what else can be seriously believed?—there is no foundation for the view of those who say that we should placate evil gods lest they harm us and invoke the good ones that they may help us. But malicious gods are nonexistent. Therefore, as they say, only to beneficent ones should the due honor of worship be paid. What kind of deities, then, are those who love theatrical plays and demand them as a part of worship in their honor? Their power proves that they exist and this passion shows that they are evil. We know how Plato regarded these scenic exhibitions,[2] since he considered that poets, for composing songs unworthy of the majesty and goodness of the gods, should be banished from the state.

Who, then, are these deities who defend the plays in opposition to Plato himself? While he cannot endure to have the divinities defamed, they demand that falsely imputed depravities be enacted in their honor! Finally, when they commanded that plays should be re-established, they added to the turpitude of desire malignity in deeds. When Titus Latinius[3] refused to obey, they snatched away his son and plagued him with disease, and then removed the malady as soon as he complied with their command. However, though these gods were thoroughly evil, Plato did not think that they should be feared. With robust constancy, he kept to his opinion and had no hesitation in removing from a well-ordered state all

1 In such passages as *Republic* 2, p. 379, and *Laws* 10, p. 885.
2 *Republic* 3; cf. above, 2.14.
3 Cf. *ibid.* 4.26.

those sacrilegious frivolities of the poets which delighted the demons in their fellowship of filth.

Labeo, however, as I have already mentioned in Book II,[4] placed Plato himself among the demigods. This Labeo maintained that malignant divinities should be appeased by bloody victims and appropriate supplications, while the good gods should be reverenced by plays and the like which one associates with joy. How is it, then, that the demigod Plato constantly dared to deprive not only the inferior deities but the full gods and, therefore, the good gods of those pleasures which he considered base? Certainly, the facts about these gods refute the opinion of Labeo. In regard to Latinius, they showed themselves not only sportive and frolicsome but even cruel and terrible. Therefore, we shall ask the Platonists to give us their answer to this problem. For, following the conclusions of their master, they agree that all the gods are good and honorable and are in sympathy with the virtues of the wise. They consider it a grave offense to think otherwise concerning any of their gods. Since they are ready to explain their views, let us listen with attention.

Chapter 14

Certain philosophers have declared that of all living beings possessed of rational souls there is a threefold division into gods, men, and demons. The gods, who hold the highest place, reside in heaven; men, who hold the lowest, sojourn on earth; demons, in the middle, inhabit the air. As the dignity of their abode is diverse, so, also, is that of their nature. The gods are superior to both men and demons. Men, both in the order of nature and the scale of values, are inferior to both gods and

4 Cf. *ibid.* 2.14.

demons. The demons, therefore, are in the middle. As they are lower than the gods in place and dignity, so they are higher than men. They have immortality of the body in common with the gods, but passions of the mind in common with men.

Therefore, we should not wonder, it is said, if these demons delight in the obscenities of the stage and in the fables of poetry. The reason is that they are subject to human emotions which are far removed from and altogether foreign to the gods. From this it follows that, when Plato prohibited these poetical fictions, which he detested, he did not deprive the gods but the demons of the pleasure of these theatrical plays. For the gods themselves are absolutely good and noble.

These ideas are to be found in many writings, but it was left for the Platonist, Apuleius of Madaura, to devote to this subject an entire book, entitled *The God of Socrates.* In it he discusses at length the nature of that spirit which Socrates kept near him as a sort of friend and familiar. This spirit was in the habit of warning Socrates whenever he attempted any action that would not accrue to his advantage. Apuleius says openly and proves convincingly that this companion was not a god but a demon. And, continuing the discussion, he deals with the opinions of Plato concerning the sublimity of the gods, the lowliness of men, and the intermediate state of the demons.

Now, if this be true, how did Plato dare to deprive even these demons of their theatrical dissipations by expelling the poets from the city? The gods themselves, of course, he left untouched, since he makes them inaccessible to human infirmities. Perhaps this is the answer. Plato wished to admonish man that his soul, even while imprisoned in mortal members, should for the sake of the splendor of virtue, despise the seductive demands of the demons and detest their uncleanness.

At any rate, if Plato deserves esteem for banishing and flouting such defilements, then certainly the demons were disreputable for decreeing and exacting them.

Therefore, either Apuleius was wrong and Socrates' spirit did not belong to this class of divinities; or, Plato contradicted himself by first honoring the demons and then, later, removing their festivals from a self-respecting state; or, Socrates is not to be congratulated on the friendship of a demon which so embarrassed even Apuleius that he gave the title, *Concerning the God of Socrates,* to a book which, according to its own careful and thorough distinction between gods and demons, should not have been called *Concerning the God* but *Concerning the Demon of Socrates.* He preferred, evidently, to admit this distinction in the contents rather than in the title of his book. Fortunately, our sound philosophy has so illumined the world that nearly everyone now has a horror of the name, 'demon,' so that anyone seeing the title, *Concerning the Demon of Socrates,* before reading Apuleius on the dignity of these spirits, would jump to the conclusion that Apuleius was insane.

But, just exactly what did Apuleius find to praise in these demons? Nothing but their subtlety, strength of body, and lofty habitation. When he spoke in a general way about their behavior, he had nothing good but much evil to report. In fine, no one who has read this book is at all astonished that the demons should wish to include the obscenities of the stage among their sacred rites and, desiring to be deemed as gods, should be delighted with the vices of the deities. Nor is the reader suprised that everything in their sacred rites, whether it evokes laughter by its lewd solemnity or horror by its shameless inhumanity, is in accord with their passions.

Chapter 15

No truly religious man, who is subject to God, could conclude from these facts that the demons are better than men because they have better bodies. Or, if he did, he would have to prefer many of the brute beasts that far surpass him in acuteness of sense, agility and celerity of movement, bodily strength, and in vigorous duration of life. No man can equal the eagle's or vulture's power of vision, or the dog's sense of smell, or the hare's or bird's swiftness of flight. No man can equal the strength of the lion or the elephant, or the age of the serpent which, so they say, sloughs old age with its skin and renews its youth.

Just as we transcend all these animals by our reason and understanding, so ought we to soar above all these demons by our noble and virtuous lives. We can even learn, from the fact that Divine Providence has bestowed on them superior gifts of body, the lesson that our soul by which we surpass them is meant to be more carefully cultivated than are our bodies. We should even learn to despise physical excellence which the demons undoubtedly share, in comparison with morality in which we outmatch them, without forgetting that our immortality of the body is to be free from an eternity of torture if it has been prepared for by purity of soul.

We may now consider the loftiness of their abode. It would be perfectly ridiculous for us to be so swayed by the fact that demons inhabit the air while we have to live on earth as to think that they are, therefore, superior to us. By the same token, every bird in the air would be better than we are. Yes, our opponents reply, but, when the birds are fatigued by flying or in need of nourishment, they return to earth for rest or

food, and this the demons never do. By such a statement, perhaps, they mean to imply that birds are better than men and demons better than birds. Of course, it is folly to reason in this vein, and no less so to argue that, because the demons dwell in a more exalted element, we should subject ourselves to them by a religious reverence.

The truth of the matter is that the birds of the air not only are not superior to us terrestrial beings, but are even subject to us by reason of the dignity of man's rational soul. In the same way, although the air is higher than the earth on which we live, it does not follow that demons who are more aerial are therefore more admirable than we are. On the contrary, we are far better off, since the despair of demons is incomparably worse than the hope of holy men.

It is true that in Platonic theory[1] the four elements—two extremes, movable fire and immovable earth, and two middle elements, air and water—are so neatly arranged in a hierarchy of values that fire is just as much better than air and air as much better than water as water is better than earth. Such a theory should be a sufficient warning not to judge the values of living creatures according to the Platonic scale of the elements. Apuleius himself, like everyone else, calls man an earthly animal,[2] but rates him far above aquatic animals in spite of the fact that Plato reckons water higher than earth. So that even Platonists should understand that in gauging the goodness of souls they ought not to take account of the order that may exist in the hierarchy of matter, for a poorer body may have a better soul and a poorer soul inhabit a better body.

1 *Timaeus*, p. 31.
2 *De Deo Socratis* 3.

Chapter 16

This same Platonist, discussing the character of demons, declares them subject to the same emotions as men, irritated by injuries, placated by propitiation and gifts, rejoicing in honors, reveling in a variety of sacred rites, and annoyed when neglected. Apuleius further asserts that the demons are responsible for the divination of augury, soothsaying, and prophecy and dreams, not to mention the miracles of magic. In a short definition he says that demons are animal in genus, passive in soul, rational in mind, aerial in body, eternal in duration, sharing the first three of these five qualities with men, the fourth being a property peculiar to themselves and the fifth a characteristic shared with the gods.

I observe, however, that, of the first three attributes which they have in common with men, two are shared by the gods; for, according to Apuleius, the gods, also, are animals. When he assigns to each species of animal its own peculiar element, he reckons us as terrestrial animals along with other things that live and feel on earth, fishes and other things that swim, as water animals, demons as aerial, and gods ethereal animals. If the genus of demons is animality, it is a genus they share not only with men but, also, with gods and beasts. In so far as they are rational in mind they have a note common to both gods and men. In eternity of duration they are akin to the gods alone; in being subject to passion, to men alone. In being aerial in body, they are unique.

Hence, it is of no significance that they are animal in genus —for so are the beasts. Nor does their rationality give them any superiority over men, since we, also, are intelligent. As to their being eternal in duration, what good is that if they are not blessed? Far better is temporal happiness than eternal misery. Moreover, the fact that they are subject to passion

gives them no superiority to us, for so are we, and, what is more, it is the badge of our misfortune. And what dignity does their aerial body bring them, since a soul of any kind whatsoever is preferable to the best of bodies, and since, therefore, no religious worship which is a duty of the soul can ever be due to any thing which is inferior to the soul?

Moreover, if Apuleius had only listed virtue, wisdom and happiness as qualities of demons and could have added that, like the gods, they enjoy these eternally, then, indeed, what he said would have been both satisfying and highly significant. Even so, we would still owe divine worship not to them but rather to God Himself whom we would recognize as the giver of all these gifts. Still less have these aerial animals a claim on divine honors now that we know that they have reason only as a capacity for suffering, passions only to make them miserable, and eternity only that there may be no end to their misery.

Chapter 17

Omitting all the other points and confining myself to the passions of the soul which, Apuleius declares, the demons have in common with man, and supposing that each of the four elements is full of living creatures—fire and air with immortals, water and earth with mortal beings—I ask: Why are the souls of demons disturbed by the tumults and tempests of passion? Passion corresponds to the Greek word *pathos.* Hence, Apuleius speaks of the demons being passive in soul. By passion, word for word from the Greek, *pathos,* he means a movement of the soul counter to reason.

But why should these movements, unknown to beasts, exist in the souls of demons? If anything analogous to them should

be apparent in animals, it could not be called passion, since it could not be contrary to a non-existent reason in beasts. In men, however, these irregularities can occur, caused either by folly or misery. For we are not yet blessed with that perfection of wisdom which is promised to us at the end of time when we shall have been liberated from this mortality.

The gods, as the Platonists admit, do not suffer these perturbations, because they are not only eternal but also happy—not that their rational souls are any different from men's, save that they are free from every blot or blemish. It seems, then, that the gods are free from passions because they are happy animals rather than afflicted ones, and that the beasts are passionless because they are animals incapable of either joy or sorrow. So, the conclusion must be that demons, like men, are subject to passion because they are animals living not in gladness but in sadness.

Therefore, what folly, if not madness, would it be for us to bow down in religious worship to demons, when by true religion we are freed from the imperfection which we share with them. Even Apuleius himself, so indulgent with the demons in judging them worthy of divine honors, was obliged to admit that they are motivated by anger, whereas our true religion bids us not to yield to anger but to conquer it. Demons are allured by gifts; true religion forbids us to show favor because of gifts received. Demons are mollified by honors; true religion prescribes that we be not swayed by any such things. Demons hate some men and love others, not prompted by a prudent and tranquil judgment but—as Apuleius would say—by the passions of their souls; true religion bids us to love even our enemies.

Finally, true religion demands that we should temper all those waves and billows of the heart and mind, all those tides and tempests of the spirit, on which, as Apuleius says, the

souls of demons seethe and toss. What else, then, but folly or some extraordinary mistake can make a man so belittle himself as to reverence a being whom, in reality, he hates even to resemble? For, how can a man be willing to worship and unwilling to imitate, when the very essence of religion is to imitate the one whom we worship.[1]

Chapter 18

It is futile, therefore, for Aupleius, and for any others of like mind, to dignify the demons with the office of communicating the prayers of men to the gods and the graces of the gods to men. This explains their location in the air, midway between ethereal heaven and earth, because—so Plato is supposed to have said[1]—no god can communicate directly with man. Those who believe such things consider it improper for gods and men to have direct intercommunication. However, it is becoming enough for demons so to communicate with both gods and men as to present men's petitions to gods, and to carry back the favors granted. In such a religion, a man who is chaste and a total stranger to the wickedness of magical arts must employ demons, who love such things, as patrons to gain a hearing from the gods. Yet, the very fact that a man hates such things makes him more worthy of having his prayers answered both more readily and more willingly.

These demons delight in such obscenities of the stage as modesty detests, and love the thousand baleful arts of sorcery which innocence abhors. That is why—we must suppose—the pure and guiltless, unqualified by their own merits, must, if

1 . . . *cum religionis summa sit imitari quem colis.*

1 *Symposium,* p. 203A.

they would seek succor of the gods, use their enemies as mediators. Not, indeed, that Apuleius tries to justify the poetic fables and theatrical mockeries; for, even though human decency can sink so low as not only to delight in filth but even to think it satisfying to divinity, we can still challenge these fables with the supreme authority for Platonists, their master, Plato.

Chapter 19

As for the condemnation of magic, need I appeal beyond public opinion against the miserable handful of wicked men who boast about this art? Why, for instance, is magic so severely punished by the law if it is the work of divinities worthy of worship? And let no one think that it was the Christians who originated the penalties for magical arts. Unless it is an undoubted fact that these bewitchments are a menace to mankind, what sense can we make of these lines of our illustrious poet:

> 'I swear, dear sister, to the gods, to you and
> your dear head,
> That I unwillingly do gird myself with magic
> arts.'[1]

Take, again, his other reference to witchcraft, in the line: 'I have seen standing crops transported to another soil.'[2] The allusion is to the rumors that one man's crops could be transferred to another man's fields by this noxious and accursed craft. Is it not Cicero who recalls that the crime is set down in the Twelve Tables, the most ancient laws of the Romans,

1 Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.492-493.
2 *Eclog.* 8.99.

and that a penalty is prescribed for the guilty party? One last question: Was it before Christian judges that Apuleius himself was accused of magic arts? If he had really considered that the charges made against him were devout and godly deeds, consistent with the workings of divine power, then he should not only have confessed them but have openly professed them,[3] denouncing such laws as prohibited and penalized actions which ought to be held worthy of admiration and approbation.

He might thus have won the judges to his way of thinking. Or, if the magistrates, cleaving to the concept of their own iniquitous laws, sentenced him to death for proclaiming and praising the occult science, no doubt his demons would have lavishly requited his soul for fearlessly proclaiming their ministry divine at the price of his human life. This is how our Christian martyrs conducted themselves when they were brought to trial for the crime of their religion. Sure of salvation and of eternal glory, they did not choose to avoid temporal punishment by denying their religion, but, rather, by confessing, professing, proclaiming it and by enduring all things with faith and fortitude, and then by dying for it with devout tranquility, they made their judges so ashamed of the laws that they were compelled to have them changed.

There is extant a lengthy and eloquent speech of this Platonic philosopher[4] in which he defends himself against the accusation of magic and seeks to establish his innocence by no other means than by denying that such deeds could be done by an innocent person. Yet, all the marvels of magicians, whom rightly he agrees to condemn, are born of the doctrines and deeds of the demons. Why in the world, then, does he argue that these demons should be honored? Or why does he

3 . . . *non solum eas confiteri debuit, sed etiam profiteri.*
4 The *Apologia* of Apuleius.

insist that they are necessary for offering our petitions to the gods? The fact is that they are the very ones whose works we must shun if we want our prayers to reach the true God.

I would like to ask, next, what sort of prayers does he think are presented from men to the gods by the demons? Are they magical or lawful? If magical, the gods do not want the prayers; if lawful, they will not welcome the mediators.[5] Suppose a penitent sinner pours out prayers, especially if he confesses magic, can he really expect pardon through the intercession of those whose compulsion or seduction led him, so he pleads, into sin? Or do the demons themselves first repent their deception before they can merit pardon for the penitents deceived? Such a statement has never been uttered concerning demons. For, were it true that they aspired to obtain for others the grace of pardon by their own repentance, never would they have dared to seek divine honors for themselves. For this daring is detestable pride, whereas repentance implies a humility that is deserving of pity.

Chapter 20

Yet, it is argued, the reason for the demons mediating between gods and men, namely, to present the prayers of men and bring back pledges from the gods, is one of urgent necessity. But what, then, is this urgency and how great is this necessity? Our opponents answer: God holds no intercourse with men. Now, what kind of sanctity in God is this that He will not listen to a suppliant and penitent man, but will deal with an arrogant and deceiving demon; that He will not welcome a man returning to God, but will consort with a demon who pretends to be God; that He will spurn a man craving

5 *Si magicas, nolunt tales; si licitas, nolunt per tales.*

pardon, but will turn to a demon counseling evil; that He will have have nothing to do with a philosophical writer who would expel poets from a well-ordered state, but will favor a demon who demands from princes and priests public theatrical mockeries penned by the poets; that He will not associate with a man who restrains the fancy of poets from ascribing crimes to the gods, but will associate with a demon who delights in these flights of imagined iniquities; that He will not associate with men who justly punish the magic mongers, but will associate with demons who teach and manipulate magic tricks; that He will not associate with men who shun the imitation of demons, but will associate with demons who set snares for the deception of men?

Chapter 21

Now, just listen to the absolute necessity of this monstrous absurdity and outrage. Ethereal gods, we are told, even though interested in human affairs, would be ignorant of men's earthly activities unless aerial demons enlightened them. The reason given is that ether is suspended high above and far from the earth, while the air is contiguous to both earth and ether. What a remarkable bit of reasoning! The wisdom of these philosophers comes to this. They want all the gods to be good and concerned with the affairs of men—otherwise, they might seem unworthy of worship. At the same time, because of the distance between the elements, they want these same gods to be ignorant of the affairs of men—otherwise, they could not believe that demons are indispensable. Hence the conclusion: the demons should be worshiped because through them the gods can learn about human affairs and be helpful to men in case of need.

If such be the case, a demon, by reason of physical propinquity, is better known to gods than a man, by reason of moral integrity. What a sorry necessity or, rather, what a ridiculous and reprehensible illusion this is! We need the demons to save the divinity from futility! If, as a fact, the gods are spirits free from the trammels of matter in their vision of men's minds, they do not need the mediation of demons. If, on the contrary, ethereal gods need their bodies to perceive corporeal manifestations of the soul, such as speech, facial expression and gestures, and can only thus receive messages from the demons, then they can be deceived by the lies of the demons. Or, if the divinity of the gods cannot be deluded by demons, then neither can that same divinity be unaware of what we are doing.

What I would like to know from these philosophers is this: Have the demons told the gods the truth that Plato disliked the poetic fictions that portray the crimes of the gods, while concealing the fact that they themselves are delighted with them? Or have they divulged neither fact, preferring to keep the gods ignorant of the whole affair, or proclaimed both, namely, the pious prudence of Plato concerning the gods and their own irresponsible passions? Or, again, have they dissimulated the fact that Plato refused to the poets the impious license of depreciating the gods by fictitious crimes without being either ashamed or afraid to bring to light their own sacrilegious love of theatrical plays in which the indecencies of the gods are publicly displayed?[1]

Let them choose any one of these four questions which I have asked, they will notice how poor is their opinion of the gods. If they should elect the first, they must confess that it was not permitted the good deities to communicate with

1 *Republic* 2, pp. 377ff.

virtuous Plato, although he prohibited whatever might be injurious to them, while they could deal with depraved demons who exulted in these very slanders—their reason being that good gods cannot know a good man so remote from them except through bad demons whom, for all their nearness, they cannot know. If these philosophers choose the second question and admit that both facts are concealed by the demons, namely, that the gods have not the remotest idea either of the religious law of Plato or of the irreligious delights of the demons, then, what useful knowledge can the gods gain concerning human affairs through these messengers, since they realize nothing of what has been decreed in their honor, by religious and pious men, counter to the passions of perverted demons.

Perhaps they would choose the third question, replying that these messengers have reported to the gods not only Plato's opinion that insults to the gods should be forbidden, but, also, their own inclinations to rejoice in such offences. What is such a report but an insult? The gods have heard and understood both facts. Yet, they have not kept from their presence these malignant demons whose desires and deeds are so contrary to the dignity of the gods and to the piety of Plato. In fact, they have kept these evil spirits near them to transmit gifts to the good Plato who is far away. The concatenated series of elements binds them in such a way that they may associate with those by whom they are incriminated but not with the man by whom they are defended. They know both the one and the other, but are unable to change the respective densities of air and earth.

There remains the choice of trying to answer the fourth question. This is worse than the others. Who could ever agree that demons announce to gods the slanderous fictions of the poets concerning immortal deities, the indecent mockeries of

the theaters, and the demons' own ardent desire and complacent delight in all these things, and, at the same time, be silent about the fact that Plato, with his sense of philosophical responsibility, resolved to banish all such abuses from a well-regulated republic? Who could believe that good gods should be forced to learn through such envoys the worst of evils about these very envoys themselves and, on the contrary, should not be allowed to learn the good deeds of philosophers —although the former do as much harm as the latter do honor to the gods?

Chapter 22

Since not one of these four hypotheses can be selected without obliging us to think so ill of the gods, it follows that we should repudiate the propaganda of Apuleius and other philosophers of like opinion who try to persuade us that demons are mediators and interpreters, presenting men's prayers to the gods and returning with divine patronage for men. This is in no way true. These demons are spirits ever itching to injure, completely removed from righteousness, puffed up with pride, livid with jealousy, adroit in artifice. They may inhabit the air, but that is because they were cast down from the sublimity of high heaven, condemned to this place as to a prison in punishment of their irremediable transgression. Nor does it follow, because air is placed above earth and water, that these spirits are superior to men in merit. On the contrary, human beings surpass them easily, not by strength of body but by grace of soul, once they have chosen the true God as their protector.

However, there are many men, manifestly unworthy to participate in the true religion, whom the demons dominate

as captive and cringing creatures, persuading the majority of them by tricky prodigies and pretended prophecies that demons are divine. On the other hand, a few men who have studied the vices of these demons more attentively and assiduously could not be prevailed upon to believe them deities. So the spirits feigned to be intermediaries and impetrators of gifts between men and gods. Even this last recognition has been refused by those men who knew the demons could not be divine because they were manifestly wicked, and all gods, of course, must be good. However, those men did not dare to declare that the demons were entirely unworthy of worship. They feared to scandalize the masses whose open and inveterate superstition led them to the service of demons in so many shrines and solemnities.

Chapter 23

The writings[1] of Hermes, the Egyptian, called Trismegistus, reveal a very different idea about these demons. It is true that Apuleius denied that they are gods. Nevertheless, on the ground that, as mediators between men and gods, the demons are indispensable to mortals in their relation to gods, he does not distinguish their cult from the worship of the superior gods. The Egyptian, however, admits two categories of gods: some made by the supreme God; others by men.

A reader might suppose that I refer to images, the work of men's hands. But Hermes maintains that these visible and tangible representations are, as it were, the bodies of gods. He claims that they are animated by spirits who have been invited to dwell within them and have power either to harm

1 One of them, *Asclepius*, the dialogue between Hermes and Ascelpius. was translated into Latin by Apuleius.

or to favor those who render them reverence and divine honor. Thus, by some kind of art, invisible spirits are united with visible and material things, which then become animated bodies dedicated and devoted to the spirits that inhabit them. This, says Hermes, is what it means 'to make gods,' and this great and amazing gift has been entrusted to men.

The words of the Egyptian, in translation, are as follows: 'Since you and I have decided to discuss the question of kinship and fellowship between men and gods, I want you to realize, Asclepius, the power and force of man. Just as the Lord and Father, or the supreme reality, God, is the creator of celestial gods, so is man the maker of deities who dwell in temples, satisfied to stay with mortals.'[2] Later, he says: 'Humanity, ever mindful of its nature and origin, persists in imitating divinity. As the Lord and Father has fashioned eternal gods to be like himself, so man has modeled his own deities according to the likeness of his own countenance.'

When Asclepius, to whom he was especially addressing himself, asked: 'Are you speaking of statues, Trismegistus?' Hermes replied: 'Statues! Asclepius, what an unbeliever you are! I mean living statues endowed with sense and spirit able to do all sorts of things, statues with a vision of the future and capable of divination by lot, prophecy, dreams and many other means, causing human maladies and then curing them, punishing and rewarding man with grief and gladness. Do you not know, Asclepius, that Egypt is an image of heaven? Or, to express myself more accurately, I should say that whatsoever is directed and effected by the gods above descends and is transported here. Indeed, it may even more truly be said that our land is the temple of the whole world. However, since it is good for a wise man to know the whole future, it would be wrong for you not to realize that a time will come when it

2 *Asclepius* 23.

will be manifest that the Egyptians, for all their pious purpose and careful conscientiousness, have paid homage to the gods in vain.'[3]

Hermes then expands this passage into what seems to be a prediction of the present period in which Christianity is destroying all such deceitful images with a decision and freedom in proportion to the truth and holiness of our religion, and with the hope that the grace of our Saviour may save men from his self-made gods and subject him to that true God by whom he was created. However, in this prediction, Hermes speaks sympathetically of these demoniacal tricks without making any overt mention of the name of Christianity. Instead, he deplores the future as though he were witnessing the removal and destruction of rites which guaranteed to Egypt its likeness to heaven, and he speaks, as it were, like a prophet of woe.

Hermes, in fact, was one of those whom the Apostle had in mind when he said that 'although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened. For while professing to be wise, they became fools, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man'[4]—and the rest which is too long to quote.

Much of what Hermes says about the one true God, Creator of the world, contains an element of truth, and I cannot understand by what blindness of heart he could wish men to be always subject to gods made, as he admits, by men and how he could deplore the future disappearance of these idols. For, what could be more hapless than a man controlled by his own creations? It is surely easier for a man to cease to

3 *Ibid.* 24.
4 Rom. 1.21-23.

be a man by worshiping man-made gods than for idols to become divine by being adored. For it is easier to compare a man to cattle if, for all his human dignity, he lacks understanding than to prefer a work of man to a creation of God, made to His own image—that is, to man himself. It is right, therefore, to reckon a man a recreant to his Creator when he hands himself over to a creation of his own hands.[5]

Hermes Trismegistus lamented these vain, deceptive, pernicious, sacrilegious things because he foresaw that the time was coming when they would be abolished. He was as impudent in his grief as imprudent in his prophecy,[6] since the Holy Spirit had made no revelation to him as to the holy prophets who exultantly proclaimed their inspired visions: 'Shall a man makes gods unto himself, and they are no gods?'[7] and again: 'And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will destroy the names of idols out of the earth, and they shall be remembered no more.'[8] It is relevant to recall that holy Isaias uttered a particular prophecy concerning Egypt: 'And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof'[9] and the rest.

In the same class with these prophets were those who rejoiced because they knew He had come whom they had been expecting. Such were Simeon and Anna, who recognized Jesus when He was born, and Elizabeth, who, in the Spirit, realized that He had been conceived, and Peter, who, by revelation of the Father, affirmed: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'[10] But the spirits who indicated the time

5 . . . *homo deficit ab illo qui eum fecit, cum sibi praeficit ipse quod fecit.*
6 . . . *tam inpudenter dolebat, quam inprudenter sciebat.*
7 Jer. 16.20.
8 Zach. 13.2.
9 Isa. 19.1.
10 Matt. 16.16.

of their own future destruction to this Egyptian were the same as those who said to the Lord now present in the flesh: 'Hast thou come here to destroy us before the time?'[11]—either trembling because predestined destruction was come sooner than they expected, or trembling with shame because it was torment enough to be found out and despised.

It was, indeed, 'before the time,' that is, before the day of judgment when they are to be punished by eternal damnation together with all—including men—who sought their society. Such is the teaching of that religion which neither deceives nor can be deceived—unlike this Hermes Trismegistus blown this way and that by every wind of doctrine, mingling truth with error and grieving for a perishing religion which he later confesses to be wrong.

Chapter 24

After many digressions, Hermes again returns to his subject concerning gods fashioned by men. He writes: 'Enough on these other matters; let us now return to man and to reason, that divine gift in virtue of which man is called a rational animal. All the admirable qualities we have already attributed to man are not the most admirable. The marvel of marvels is that man, by his reason, has been able to discover the divine nature and call it to life.

'Once our ancestors, through incredulity and negligence in divine worship, fell into serious error concerning the essence of the deity, they invented the art of making gods. To this art they associated an appropriate force borrowed from the universe. And since they were not able to create souls, they evoked those of demons or angels and united them with

11 Matt. 8.29.

sacred images and divine mysteries so that idols might have the power to aid or injure men.'[1]

I am not sure whether or not the demons, even under oath, would make their own this confession of Hermes: 'Once our ancestors, through incredulity and negligence in divine worship, fell into serious error concerning the essence of the deity, they invented the art of making gods.' Note that he does not say that they fell into a slight error which led to the making of gods; nor was he content to say that they fell into error. What he said was: they fell into serious error. Hence, it was this serious error and the incredulity of men who were neglecting divine worship that led to the art of fashioning gods. Yet, in spite of the fact that serious error, incredulity, and neglect of divine worship led to the invention of idols, this wise man laments the future destruction of idolatry as if it were a divine religion. Must we not say that a supernatural influence compels him to admit the past error of his people, while a diabolical power compels him to deplore the prospective punishment of the demons? Granted then, that it was the serious error of his ancestors concerning the essence of the deity, their incredulity and their remissness in the rites of divine religion which led to the invention of idols, is it any wonder that a divine religion should destroy the works of this detestable art, so contrary to divine religion? Truth amends error; faith refutes incredulity; conversion is the cure for aversion.[2]

Even if Hermes had been silent about the causes, saying only that his ancestors had invented the art of making gods, it would still have been our duty, if we had any sense of ethics and religion, to realize that men would never have reached the magic of making gods, had they not wandered

1 *Asclepius* 37.
2 . . . *conversio corrigit aversionem.*

from truth, if their faith had been worthy of God, and if they had paid attention to the ceremonies of a divine religion. However, if Christians were the ones to say that the roots of idolatry were serious error, incredulity, and the turning away of man's erring and faithless soul from divine religion, we would have to put up, as best we could, with the impudence of those who are resisting the truth. But, now that this very Hermes, who so admires this power of making gods more than any other prerogative in man, and who laments a future time when all these man-made figments of the gods will be destroyed by law, is the one who confesses and explicitly states the causes which led to idolatry—serious error on the part of his ancestors, their incredulity, and their negligence in attending to divine religion—what else can we say or, rather, do than to render our best gratitude to the Lord our God who has eradicated idolatry by means the very opposite of those by which it was established.

What was lost in a forest of errors has been found on the road of truth. What incredulity began faith has ended. What was founded by aversion to religious worship has been confounded by conversion to the one, true, holy God. Nor is this the case only in Egypt (as the spirit of the demons, through Hermes, complains) but in every land where a new canticle is sung to the Lord, according to the prediction of the really sacred and prophetical Scriptures: 'Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: sing to the Lord, all the earth.'[3] The caption of this psalm reads: 'When the house was built after the captivity.' For, the house for the Lord, the City of God, that is, the Holy Church, is being built over all the earth after the captivity ceased whereby demons had held captive those men who, once converted to faith in God, became as

3 Ps. 95.1.

living stones in the construction of His house.[4] For, although man had made his own gods, he nevertheless was their captive once he was handed over to their fellowship by his act of worshiping them. And I do not mean a fellowship of stupid idols, but of cunning devils.

For, what are idols but things, as the Scripture says, which 'have eyes and see not.'[5] What else could be said of material effigies, no matter how skillfully carved, that lack both life and feeling?

It was unclean spirits bound to these idols by nefarious magic that took captive the wretched souls of their devotees and reduced them to the level of their own society. That explains what the Apostle says: 'We know that an idol is nothing; but what the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God; and I would not have you become associates of devils.'[6]

It is after this captivity, in which men were held by malignant demons, that the house of the Lord is being built over all the earth. Hence the title of the psalm which runs: 'Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing ye to the Lord and bless his name: show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the Gentiles: his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great and exceedingly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils: but the Lord made the heavens.'[7]

Hermes, however, who lamented that in the future the cult of idols and the domination of demons over their devotees would disappear, was instigated by the evil spirit when he wished that captivity to last forever after the passing of

4 Cf. 1 Pet. 2.5.
5 Ps. 113.5.
6 1 Cor. 8.4; 10.20.
7 Ps. 95.1-5.

which, as the psalmist sings, the house of the Lord is being built over all the earth. Hermes predicts the destruction with grief; the Prophet predicts it with joy. And because the Spirit has triumphed which inspired the song of the holy Prophets, even Hermes, in some marvelous way, was obliged to confess—although he dreaded and deplored their future abolition —that these pernicious rites had not been established by prudent, devout, and religious men, but by erring and incredulous ones who had abandoned the practice of divine worship.

Although Hermes calls these idols gods, he nevertheless admits that they were made by men whose example we should not follow and thus, willy-nilly, he proves that these idols should not be worshiped by men unlike the men who made them, that is, by wise, believing, and religious men. Moreover, he implies that the fabricators brought upon themselves the guilt of reckoning as gods things that are not gods. Very true is that prophecy: 'Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?'[8] This, then, is what Hermes means by man-made gods. Such gods made and adored by such men are but evil spirits imprisoned by magic in idols and bound there by the chains of their own passions. Unlike the Platonist Apuleius (whose opinion we have sufficiently shown to be illogical and absurd), Hermes does not even grant them the privilege of acting as interpreters and intercessors between God-made deities and God-made men bearing men's prayers and returning with God's gifts.

It is surely stupid to think that man-made idols have more influence with God-made deities than have men themselves who were made by the self-same God. A demon bound to a statue by the impious art of a man is a god for the idol-maker but not for all men. What sort of a god is this, then, that

8 Jer. 16.20.

would not even be made except by a man who was in error, incredulous and in revolt against the true God.

It has now been shown that the demons, honored in the temples, were introduced by some mysterious craft into statues or visible images; that the authors of this art of making gods were erring men, averse to the worship of divine religion; that these demons are not intermediaries or interpreters between men and gods, first because of their own detestable and disgraceful behavior and, second because men, however erring, unbelieving, and hostile to the worship of a divine religion, are, without doubt, better than the gods which they have made by magic. It remains to be seen that whatever these spirits can do they accomplish only by reason of the fact that they are demons, being most harmful when they pose as benefactors because the deception is greater and, when they openly flaunt their evil, having only such power as is permitted by the high and secret providence of God. As for their role of mediators between man and gods, the demons' association with the gods gives them scant influence over men.

The fact is that demons can in no way be friendly with those good gods who are known to us as holy angels—rational creatures whose dwelling place is holy and heavenly, such as the Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, and Powers. These angelic spirits, by the affection of their souls, are as far distant from demons as virtue is from vice and goodness from malice.

Chapter 25

We should not, therefore, seek through demons as mediators the good will and gifts of the good gods, or, as we would rather say, of the good angels. We should strive to be like the

angels, being one with them in will, living with them, and adoring, along with them, the God whom they adore, even though we do not see them with our eyes of flesh. And if we are separated from them by reason of the weakness of our will and by the misery of our human infirmity, this is a matter of grace and not of space. It is only because we savor of earth in the uncleanness of our hearts, not because we live on earth in the condition of flesh, that we fail to be one with the angels. However, while we are being healed in the hope of resembling them, we may, by faith, even now approach them if only we believe that, by their intercession, the same God who made them blessed will make us no less happy.

Chapter 26

We should take special note of a remark of that Egyptian made while he was deploring the future destruction of idols in Egypt and confessing that they were the work of deluded, incredulous, and irreligious men: 'Then that land, the sacred seat of shrines and temples, shall be filled with sepulchers and with the bodies of the dead.'[1] He seems to imply that, if the idols were not destroyed, then either men would never die or, if they did, they would be buried elsewhere than in the earth; and, of course, as days and years rolled by, the number of burial mounds would increase with the increasing number of the dead.

What Hermes seems to be deploring is the fact that memorials to our martyrs were superseding their temples and their shrines. His point was—for men who are perverse and of hostile mind toward Christianity—that pagans worship gods in temples but that Christians adore the dead in sepulchers.

1 *Asclepius* 24.

There you have the kind of blindness that makes unbelievers trip, as it were, over mountains. They will not look at what is staring them in the face. They pay no attention to the fact that in all pagan literature you can find no gods—or hardly any—who were not once men and to whom, after death, divine honors were offered.

Need I recall Varro's statement that pagans believe that all their dead become divine Manes and his proof of this from the sacred rites in honor of almost all the departed. Funeral games, he insists, give undeniable proof of divinity, since it was usual to celebrate them only in honor of gods.

Even Hermes, whom we are now discussing, testifies that the gods of Egypt were dead men. He does this in the very book which contains his lugubrious prediction: 'Then that land, the sacred seat of shrines and temples, shall be filled with sepulchers and with bodies of the dead.' Having confessed that his ancestors, who were seriously in error in regard to the nature of the divinity, incredulous, and negligent in the observance of divine worship, had invented the art of making gods, he added: 'To this art they associated an appropriate force borrowed from the universe. And, since they were not able to create souls, they evoked those of demons or angels and united them with sacred images and divine mysteries so that idols might have the power to aid or injure men.'

And, as though to prove this by examples, he adds: 'Your grandfather, Asclepius, the first inventor of medicine, had a temple consecrated to him on a mountain of Libya, near the shore of the crocodiles. In this temple lies his earthly remains, that is, his body. The rest of him, or rather the whole of him —if we consider the whole human person to be the life of intelligence—has returned to and is better off in heaven. To this day, by his divinity, he offers to the sick all those remedies

which medical art is accustomed to offer.'[2] Notice that Hermes here says that a dead man was worshiped as a god in the place where he was buried—a false and deceptive statement, since he says that this same man had gone back to heaven.

Continuing, he says: 'Hermes, my grandfather, after whom I was named, dwelling in a place named in his honor, heals and helps people who come to him from all over the world.' This is the great Hermes, or Mercury, whom he claims as his grandfather, and he is said to reside in Hermopolis, that is, the city of Hermes. So, here are two gods who, according to him, once were men—Asclepius and Mercury. As to the former, both Greeks and Latins agree; but there is a common opinion that Mercury was not a mortal, even though Hermes claims him as his grandfather. Is it possible that one Mercury was mortal, and another immortal? I shall not argue the point. Suffice it to say that the Mercury who was grandfather to Trismegistus was, like Asclepius, a god who was once a mortal —if we may believe the grandson, who was a man of great prestige among his countrymen.

Hermes goes on to say: 'How many benefits does Isis, wife of Osiris, proffer when she is propitiated, and how many does she harm when angered!' Then, in order to show that all the gods made by human magic are of this type, he follows up the remark about Isis—'how many does she harm when angered' —by saying: 'It is easy for terrestrial and mundane gods to be angry inasmuch as they have been put together by men out of two natures.' By 'two natures' he means soul and body— the demon being the soul and the image the body. Thus he gives us to understand that he believes that demons are souls of the dead enclosed in statues by means of an art invented by erring, incredulous, and irreligious men who could make such gods but were unable, of course, to create souls.

2 *Ibid.* 37.

'And so,' he concludes, 'these holy idols are called animated beings by the Egyptians. Their souls are honored in the different cities that consecrated them while they were alive. These cities abide by their laws and are called by their names.'

What, then, becomes of that mournful complaint that the land of Egypt, sacred seat of shrines and temples, will be filled with sepulchers and with the bodies of the dead? Assuredly, it was a lying spirit by whose inspiration Hermes said these things and one who was compelled to confess, through Hermes, that even then that land was filled with tombs and with the dead whom they were worshiping as gods. However, it was the grief of all the demons who spoke through him, bemoaning their future punishment, so soon to fall upon them amid the memorials of the martyrs. For, in many places these evil spirits are tortured and they confess their identity as they are ejected from the bodies of the possessed.

Chapter 27

Nevertheless, we do not construct shrines, consecrate priests and render rites and sacrifices for these martyrs. The simple reason is that it is not they but God who is our God. It is true that we honor their shrines because they were holy men of God who fought for truth, even unto death, so that true religion might be made known and falsehoods and fictions be overcome. Others before them who knew the truth were too afraid to express their convictions.

Certainly, no Christian ever heard a priest, standing before an altar built for the honor and service of God over the holy body of a martyr, say in his prayers: 'I offer this Sacrifice to thee, Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian.' No! Before the monuments of these martyrs, the Sacrifice is offered to God alone, who

made them first men and then martyrs and finally associated them with His holy angels in heavenly honor. In celebrating this Sacrifice we thank this true God for their victories and, while renewing our memory of them and calling on God to help us, we encourage ourselves to imitate them in seeking like crowns and palms.

Thus, any signs of veneration paid by pious people at the tombs of martyrs are mere tributes to their memory, not sacred ceremonies nor sacrifices offered to the dead, as to gods. This is true, even of the custom of bringing food to these places—something, by the way, which is not done by more enlightened Christians and in most countries is entirely unknown. However, those who do it bring their food to the tombs and pray that it be sanctified by the merits of the martyrs in the name of the Lord of martyrs. Afterwards, they carry it away, either to eat it themselves or to distribute it to the needy. Anyone who knows that there is only one Sacrifice offered by Christians, here or elsewhere, knows that this custom is not a sacrifice to the martyrs.

We revere our martyrs, therefore, with neither divine homage nor the human vices which the pagans offer to their gods. We neither offer them sacrifices nor do we convert their sins into sacred rites. Consider, for example, Isis, the wife of Osiris, the Egyptian goddess and her ancestors, all of whom were kings according to tradition. (While offering a sacrifice to her forebears, she discovered a field of barley and carried some of the ears to the king, her husband, and to his councilor, Mercury, and so she has come to be identified with Ceres.) Now, anyone who wants to find out how many and monstrous were their wickednesses, as reported by poets and the mystic writings of the Egyptians, can get an idea from the letter which Alexander wrote to his mother, Olympias, describing

the facts as revealed to him by the priest Leo.[1] Let anyone who likes it and can stand it read it, but then let him pause and reflect in honor of what kind of man, guilty of what monstrous sins, sacred rites were offered to the dead as to gods. It is unthinkable that the pagans, even though they hold such men to be divine, should be rash enough to compare them in any way with our holy martyrs whom we do not consider gods.

If, then, we do not ordain priests for the purpose of offering sacrifices to our martyrs, for that would be incongruous, improper, and unlawful, since worship is due to God alone, still less do we regale our martyrs with their crimes or with disgraceful plays as the pagans do when they commemorate the sins of their gods—either real sins committed by their deities when they were men or, if their gods were never human, fabricated for the delight of wicked demons. The god of Socrates, if he had one, could never have belonged to this class of evil spirits, unless, perhaps, some magicians, desiring to excel in this kind of art, may have managed to impose such a deity on a man who was an utter stranger to and innocent of this art of making gods.

What more need I say? Can anyone, however slight his intelligence, imagine that such demons are to be worshiped in order that we may attain to an eternal felicity after death? Perhaps objectors, however, will answer with a distinction: As for the gods, all are good; as for the demons, some are benign and some are bad; but it is only the benevolent ones whom we should supplicate for assistance toward an eternal beatitude. This matter will be treated in the following Book.

1 Cf. below, 12.11.

BOOK NINE

Chapter 1

SOME PHILOSOPHERS have held that there are both good and evil gods. Others, with more respect for the deities, honored and praised them to the point of believing that no god could be bad. The former (who divided the gods into good and bad) often called demons by the name of 'gods,' and sometimes, though more rarely, gods by the name of 'demons.' Thus, they acknowledge that Jupiter himself, supreme ruler of all divinities, was referred to by Homer as a 'demon.'[1]

The latter (who assert that all gods must be good and with a goodness superior to any known human excellence) are compelled by the undeniable deeds of demons to distinguish between demons and gods—since the gods, all of whom are good, are incapable of committing such acts. Thus, they attribute to demons and not to gods anything that rightly displeases them in those depraved actions or passions by which unseen spirits disclose their influence.

Persuaded, moreover, that no god mingles with man, they believe that demons have been designated as mediators between men and deities, presenting the petitions of mortals and returning with gifts from the gods. This opinion is held by the Platonists, the best and best known of all philosophers,

1 Cf. *Iliad* 1.22.

and it is by reason of their superiority that I chose to discuss with them the question whether polytheistic worship is of any advantage in the quest for eternal happiness beyond the grave.[2]

In the preceding Book, I raised the question whether demons could possibly mediate, as neighbors and favorites, between the good gods and good men, considering that demons delight in doings that good and wise men are obliged to detest and condemn, as, for example, encouraging sacrilegious fables in which poets impute monstrous immoralities not to this or that man but to the very gods; not to mention the culpable and criminal violence of magical arts. The answer was: utterly and demonstrably impossible.

Chapter 2

The present Book is to deal (according to the promise at the close of the preceding one) with the pertinent question of the differences between the demons themselves, rather than with the possible dissimilarities among the gods (who are all supposed to be good) or with the disparities between gods and demons—the former being high above and remote from mortals; the latter, in Platonic theory, being intermediaries between men and gods.

It is commonly said that there are both good and wicked spirits among the demons, and this is an opinion that calls for discussion regardless of whether it is that of the Platonists or of anyone else. For, no one should think it was his duty to gain the friendship of supposedly good demons in order to become through their mediation more acceptable to the gods (all of them good) so that, after death, he may enjoy their society. The danger for such a man is that, deceived by

2 Cf. above, 8.5.

the wiles of malignant spirits and caught in their trap, he may never reach the true God, with whom and in whom and by whom alone the rational, intellectual, and human soul can attain its blessedness.

Chapter 3

How, then, do the good differ from the bad demons, since Apuleius the Platonist, in his general description of demons,[1] makes much of aerial bodies but says nothing of any virtues of the souls—without which there could be no good demons? Thus, he has nothing to say about any foundation of felicity, but he had to mention the evidence of their misery. In declaring them rational beings, he confesses that their minds are not merely not sufficiently imbued and fortified with virtue to protect them against the irrational passions of the soul, but, on the contrary, that they are tossed by the storms of emotion like the hearts of senseless mortals.

Apuleius discusses the matter as follows: 'It is, in general, of this class of demons that the poets are accustomed to write; nor are their fictions far from the truth when they represent the demons as gods who bestow prosperity and prestige on men they love and adversities and humiliations on those they hate. Hence, they experience pity, indignation, anguish, joy, and every other form of human emotion, and their minds and hearts, like those of men, are continually tossing on all the surge and tide of passionate disquietude. All such turmoil and tempests remove them far from the tranquility of celestial gods.'

Is there any doubt as to his meaning? It is evident that Apuleius is referring not to the inferior part of the soul, but to

1 *De Deo Socratis* 8.

the very minds of the demons which make them rational beings, when he says that their minds are like an angry sea tossed about by the tempests of passion. Thus, they are not to be compared to those philosophers who, in spite of the inescapable weakness of human nature and the painful vicissitudes of life, face the perturbations of passion with an imperturbable mind. Wise men do not yield to passion when they are tempted either to approve or to perpetuate any action that runs counter to the way of wisdom and the law of justice. The demons are, rather, to be compared to foolish and wicked men whom they resemble, if not in body at least in character.

In fact, they are inveterately and incorrigibly worse, punished as they are by being tossed, as Apuleius says, on the high sea of their hearts, with no rock of truth or virtue to save them from the waves of their wild and depraved affections.

Chapter 4

Two opinions prevail among philosophers concerning those movements of the soul which the Greeks call *páthē* and certain Latin philosophers, like Cicero, call 'perturbations,' others 'affections' and still others, like Apuleius who keeps closer to the Greek, 'passions.' Some contend that these perturbations, affections, or passions affect even a philosopher, tempered, however, and even tamed, by reason, so that the lordship of the mind imposes law upon them to keep them within proper bounds.

This view is shared by both Platonists and Aristotelians, since Aristotle, who founded the Peripatetic School, was the disciple of Plato. Others, such as the Stoics, hold that no wise man should be in any way influenced by passions. However,

in his treatise, *De finibus,*[1] Cicero proves that the battle between the Stoics, on one hand, and the Platonists and Peripatetics, on the other, is one of words rather than of ideas. While the Stoics refuse to apply the word 'goods' to external, bodily advantages and maintain that virtue, the art of living well and the only good, resides wholly in the mind, the other philosophers, using simple and ordinary language, call even external advantages 'goods,' slight as they may be in comparison with virtue, which guides good living. Thus, in spite of their respective words, 'goods' and 'advantages,' there is but one idea of the value of these things. The Stoics, in this case, are merely indulging in a novelty of expression. And even in the question whether the wise man is subject to passions or entirely free from them, the controversy, so it seems to me, is one rather of words than of meaning. In so far as the point at issue is the sense and not just the sound of words, in my opinion, the Stoics are at one with the Platonists and Peripatetics.

For the sake of brevity, I shall omit other illustratious and mention just one which I consider cogent. In his work, *Noctes Atticae,* the erudite and eloquent Aulus Gellius[2] tells a lengthy and detailed story of a voyage with an eminent Stoic philosopher, the main point of which is that, when a terrific storm arose and their ship was endangered by the wind and the waves, the philosopher turned pale with fear.[3] The others on board noticed this fact and, despite the danger of proximate death, were filled with curiosity so see whether or not a philosopher would betray agitation. When the tempest subsided and it was safe enough for talk and even for banter, a rich and voluptuous Asiatic who was among the passengers

1 Books 3 and 4.
2 125-175 A.D.
3 The story occurs in *Noctes Atticae* 19.1.

laughed and jeered at the philosopher for his panic and his pallor. He himself, he boasted, had remained fearless in the face of the impending destruction. Then the philosopher, availing himself of the reply of Aristippus,[4] the Socratic philosopher, who was taunted in similar circumstances by the same kind of person, answered: 'A rogue need not worry about losing his worthless life, but Aristippus has a duty to care for a life like his.'

This reply put the rich man in his place. Thereupon, Aulus Gellius, with no thought of teasing but only of learning, asked the philosopher the cause of his fear. The latter, willing to instruct a man so zealous for knowledge, took from his bag a book of Epictetus,[5] the Stoic, containing a faithful exposition of the doctrines of Zeno[6] and Chrysippus,[7] founders of the Stoic School. Aulus Gellius tells us that he read in this book the Stoic theory of *phantasiae,* namely, that certain impressions made on the mind are involuntary and beyond control, and that when these impressions are provoked by alarming and formidable external causes, even a philosopher is bound to yield momentarily to a movement of either fear or depression. Thus, such emotions may seem to anticipate the proper function of intellect and reason, yet no judgment is made concerning the evil of the exterior cause nor is any approval or consent given to the emotions.

This consent, the Stoics hold, lies in man's power, this being the difference between a wise man and a fool, that the mind of the latter yields and consents to such passions, while a philosopher, though forced to feel them, remains unshaken in soul with a true and solid judgment as to what he is rationally obliged to seek or avoid.

4 Cf. above, 8.3.
5 *c.*50-138 A.D.
6 *c.*342-*c.*270 B.C.
7 *c.*281-*c.*208 B.C.

That, as briefly as I can summarize it—more clearly than Gellius but without his elegance of style—is his account of what he found in the book of Epictetus concerning the teachings and sentiments of the Stoics.[8]

This being so, there is no difference, or almost none, between the Stoics and other philosophers on the passions and emotions of the soul, since both schools defend the opinion that the mind and reason of the wise man are free from their domination. What, perhaps, the Stoics mean, in saying that passions do not disturb the wise man, is that the wisdom by which he is wise is never clouded by error or sullied by stain because of his passions. In spite of incidental emotions arising from what they insist on calling advantages and disadvantages rather than goods and evils, the Stoic soul remains serenely wise.

For, of course, if our philosopher put no value whatever on things like life and bodily safety, which he was in danger of losing in the shipwreck, he would not have been as terrified as his pallor indicated. But the fact remains that he could suffer such emotions and, at the same time, be firmly convinced that life and security, threatened by the severity of the tempest, were not good in the sense that justice is good, that is, they could not make their possessors good.

When the Stoics insist that such things must not be called goods but advantages, this is a fight over words, not an insight into things.[9] What difference does it make whether a Stoic calls a thing a good or an advantage if he fears to lose it with the same trembling and pallor as a Peripatetic? A difference in name; the emotions are the same.[10] In reality, if they were faced with the choice of losing these 'goods' or

8 *Enchiridion* 20-22.
9 . . . *verborum certamini, non rerum examini deputandum est.*
10 . . . *ea non aequaliter appellando, sed aequaliter aestimando.*

'advantages' or of committing some sin or crime to save them, both would prefer to give up what is necessary for bodily safety and security rather than give in to a violation of justice.[11]

Even though passions may disturb the inferior part of the soul, a mind thus firmly convinced never permits passion to prevail over rational resolve. On the contrary, the mind is the master and, by refusing consent and by positive resistance, it maintains the sovereignity of virtue. Such a man, as Virgil describes him, was Aeneas:

> 'With mind unmoved he doth remain,
> While tender tears run down in vain.'[12]

Chapter 5

At present, there is no need to develop at length and in detail the doctrine contained in Sacred Scripture—fount of Christian faith—concerning passions, namely, that the mind is subject to God to be ruled and aided while the passions are subject to the mind to be tempered, tamed, and turned to the uses of righteousness. For us the important question is not whether a religious soul is subject to anger, but why this is so; not the fact of sadness, but the source of sadness; not whether a man fears, but what he fears. I hope that no one with common sense will find fault with being angry with a sinner to correct him, being sad with a sufferer to relieve him, being afraid lest a man in danger die. The Stoics, it is true, are accustomed to condemn even compassion; but how much better our Stoic would have been if he had been more moved

11 . . . *amittere, quibus natura corporis salva et incolumis habetur, quam illa committere.*

12 Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.449.

with compassion for a man in peril than afraid of his own shipwreck.

Cicero sounds better, more like a man, more like a Christian, when he says in praising Caesar: 'Of all your virtues none is more admirable and pleasing than your mercy.'[1] Now, what is mercy but a certain feeling of compassion in our hearts, evoked by the misery of another and compelling us to offer all possible aid? An emotion of this kind is a servant to reason whenever it tenders mercy without injuring justice, as in giving to the poor and forgiving the penitent.

Cicero, so discriminating in the use of words, boldly called this compassion a virtue, while the Stoics were not ashamed in numbering it among the vices. Nevertheless, as the famous Stoic, Epictetus, has shown in his work[2] based upon the doctrines of Zeno and Chrysippus, the founders of the school, the Stoics admit that passions of this kind affect the soul even of the wise man who, as they hold, must be above all evil. We must, therefore, conclude, first, that Stoics do not, in fact, consider emotions vices, since the wise man meets them in such a way that they can do nothing to change his mind or mar his virtue; and second, that the opinion of the Peripatetics or Platonists and that of the Stoics themselves turn out to be one and the same, in spite of the battle of words which, as Cicero tells us,[3] has been so long torturing the Greeks, those lovers of contention rather than of truth.

However, we may well ask the further question whether our liability to passion even in the performance of duty is not a part of the infirmity of our present life. For the holy angels punish without anger those whom the eternal law of God has

1 *Pro Ligurio* 12.37.
2 *Enchiridion.*
3 *De oratore* 1.11,47.

delivered to them for punishment,[4] succor the suffering without suffering compassion, and rescue from peril those whom they love without sharing their fear. Yet, in our human way, we speak as though the angels had all these feelings. This is done by reason of the analogy between their actions and ours, not because we attribute to them the infirmity of our own passions—much as, in Scripture, God Himself is said to be angry without implying the least movement of passion. The word 'anger' is used because God's vengeance is effective, not because His nature is affective.[5]

Chapter 6

For the time being, I shall defer this question of the holy angels in order to examine the opinion of the Platonists that the demons established as intermediaries between gods and men are seething in a surge of passions. For if, under the assults of these emotions, their minds remained free and masters of the situation, Apuleius could not say that their hearts and minds, like those of men, are tossed on all the surge and tide of passionate disquietude.[1] Notice that it is their very mind, that is, the higher part of the soul by which they are rational and in which their virtue and wisdom, if they had any, would dominate the turbulent passions of the inferior part of the soul—I repeat, it is their very mind which, according to our Platonist, is tossed on a sea of passions.

And so, the mind of demons is a slave to the passions of lust, fear, anger, and all the rest. What part of them, then,

4 Cf. Matt. 13.14.

5 . . . *vindictae usurpavit effectus, non illius turbulentus adfectus.*

1 *De Deo Socratis* 11.

can be free and wise enough either to please the gods or to urge men to aim at high moral standards? The fact is that their mind has been conquered and enslaved by sins of passion, and what little of natural intelligence they possess is all the more bent on lying and deception as their craving to injure others increases.

Chapter 7

Someone may object that the poets refer to the bad demons only and not to all when, truthfully enough, they represent the gods as animated with hate or love for individual men —for Apuleius had bad ones in mind when he said that demons ebb and flow on the sea of their minds with every tide of emotion. Now, what can we say of such an objection since Apuleius in that context was describing the position, intermediate between gods and men, occupied by all of the demons because of their aerial bodies, not just the bad ones.

Apuleius asserts that the fiction of the poets consists in transforming some of these demons into gods, giving them, with the impunity of poetic license, the names of gods and assigning to them promiscuous friendship or enmity for mortals picked at random, whereas, in fact, the gods differ from the demons in character, in the height of their heavenly habitation, and in the opulence of their beatitude. Such, then, is the fancy of the poets, to call gods beings who are not gods, to endow them with the names of deities, and then to represent them as squabbling among themselves over mortals whom they either love or hate with partisan passion.

Apuleius says that this fancy is not far from the facts because, apart from having the names of gods when they are not gods, the demons are certainly described according to

form.[1] To this category belongs, he remarks, the Minerva of Homer 'who in the midst of the Greek assembly, intervened to restrain Achilles.'[2] To call her Minerva, he claims, is a poetical fiction, since, for him, the real Minerva is a goddess among the gods—all of them good and all of them happy —high in an ethereal abode and far from contact with mortals. As for the possibility that some demon favored the Greeks against the Trojans and another the Trojans against the Greeks, taking, as Homer mentions, the name of Venus or Mars—while these gods, as Apuleius holds, abode in high heaven, far from such affairs—and that these demons battled among themselves in behalf of men whom they loved and against those whom they hated—that Apuleius confesses is a poetical fiction not far from the truth.

For, what the poets were talking about were in fact beings whose minds and hearts, like those of men, are continually tossing, as Apuleius would say, on all the surge and tide of passionate emotions, not loving and hating with any principle of justice, but, like the crowd watching a race or hunt in the arena, for or against according to partisan prejudice. It seems that this Platonic philosopher was anxious lest these poetical fictions should be believed, not of the intermediary demons, but of the gods whose names were given by the poets to the demons.

Chapter 8

Very well, but ought we to pay so little attention to Apuleius' own definition of demons, in which he certainly includes them all? It runs: Demons belong to the genus animal, with

1 *De Deo Socratis* 10.
2 Cf. *Iliad* 1.193.

a soul subject to passion, a mind endowed with reason, a body that is aerial, and an existence that is eternal.[1] In these five characteristics he has said absolutely nothing to indicate that the demons might share some quality with good men which bad men do not have.

As for men, he has a more comprehensive definition. It comes second, just after the definition of the gods, so that the two extremes, the highest and the lowest, the celestial and the terrestrial, are mentioned before the demons who came in between. 'Men,' he writes, 'are endowed with reason, gifted with speech, immortal in soul, mortal in their members, irresolute and restless in spirit, heavy and vulnerable in body, unlike in their ways but alike in their waywardness,[2] stubborn in boldness and inflexible in hope, victims of fruitless toil and fickle fortune, perishing as individuals yet perpetual as a race though changing with each generation, swift in the flight of their years and slow in the winning of wisdom, for their death is as sudden as their life is sad—such are the denizens of earth.'[3] Note that in this long recital of the qualities of the majority of men he did not omit one characteristic which he knew belongs to the few, namely, sloth in regard to wisdom. Had he done so, his carefully composed description of the human race would have been incomplete. On the other hand, when he commended the superiority of the gods, he based this on their beatitude—the goal men desire in their pursuit of wisdom. If, then, he had wished it to be understood that some of the demons are good, he should have added to his description another trait to indicate that these demons have a share in the blessedness of the gods or at least in such wisdom as men are thought to possess. As it is, he has attributed

1 *De Deo Socratis* 12.
2 . . . *dissimilibus moribus, similibus erroribus* . . .
3 *De Deo Socratis* 4.

to them no quality by which good demons can be distinguished from bad ones.

If Apuleius refrained from speaking too freely about the malice of the demons, it was less out of fear of offending them than their worshipers, for whom he was writing. Yet, he made it sufficiently clear to discerning readers what they should think about demons when he pointed out that the gods (all of whom he would have us believe are good and blessed) are utterly free from the stormy passions of the demons. In one quality only—the eternity of their bodies—are demons like gods. As to their souls, he definitely states that they are like men and not like gods, and even this likeness to men is not in the quality of wisdom which men can have, but in the perturbation of those passions which dominate the foolish and the wicked but are so ruled by the wise and the good that these latter would prefer to be altogether free from them.

Apuleius wished it to be understood that demons resemble the gods in the eternity of their bodies rather than of their souls. Otherwise he would not have distinguished men from demons by men's lack of bodily eternity, for, of course, as a Platonist, he holds that men's souls are immortal. This is what he had in mind when he defined men as a genus of animals having immortal souls and mortal members. Hence, the conclusion: If men do not share in the eternity of gods, because their bodies are mortal, then demons do share in eternity with gods, because their bodies are immortal.

Chapter 9

Now, what kind of mediators between men and gods are these demons through whom men may circuitously win the favor of the deities? For, what should be the better part of

a living being, the soul, is, in their case, inferior, since they share this element with men; and what should be the worse part, the body, is, in their case, superior, because in body they are similar to the gods. For, every living creature or animal consists of both soul and body. Of these two components, the soul, assuredly, is superior to the body. Even when vicious and weak, the soul is, without doubt, better than the healthiest and strongest body, since it is higher by nature and, even though blemished by vice, is better than the body, just as gold, even when dirty, is worth more than silver or lead, however pure. Yet, the demons, mediators between men and gods, links holding together things human and divine, have an eternal body in common with gods and a sullied soul in common with men. One would think that religion, by which men are to have contact with gods through the demons, has its roots in the body rather than in the soul.

For what wickedness or punishment have these false and fallacious[1] mediators been hung, as it were, upside down, so that their lower part, the body, unites them with beings above them, and their higher part, the soul, links with beings below them? Thus, they are similar to gods in that part that serves and are miserable with men on earth by reason of the part that rules. For, the body is a slave, as Sallust says: 'We use the soul for sovereignty and the body for service.'[2] And he added: 'The one we have in common with gods, the other with beasts.' Here, he was speaking of men, who, like brute animals, have mortal bodies.

But these demons, whom the philosophers have given us as mediators between men and gods, can, indeed, say of soul and body: 'One we have in common with gods, the other with men.' But, as I have already said, they are, as it

1 . . . *falsos adque fallaces* . . .
2 *Catiline* 1.

were, so upside down that it is their slave-like body which unites them with the blessed gods and their sovereign soul which joins them with unhappy men. They are exalted by their lower part and humbled by their higher. Therefore, even if one should think that their eternity is like the gods', merely because their souls are not severed from their bodies by death as is the case with beings on earth, their body should still be considered, not as an eternal chariot for their triumph, but as an eternal chain for their damnation.

Chapter 10

Plotinus has the distinction of having understood Plato better than all others—at least in times near to our own. In treating of human souls, he says: 'The Father, in His mercy, made for them mortal bonds.'[1] The fact that men are mortal in their bodies he attributed to the compassion of God, their Father, who was unwilling to have them confined forever to the misery of this life. Because of their iniquity, demons were not judged worthy of this mercy. Unlike men, they received, together with the unhappiness of a suffering soul subject to passion, a body, not mortal but eternal.

For, of course, they would be happier than men if, like them, they had a mortal body, and, like the gods, a blessed soul. And they would be the equal of men if, together with an unhappy soul, they had at least merited to have, like them, a mortal body—provided only that they might win some measure of grace so that, at least, in death they might rest from their torments. As it is, because of their wretched souls, not only are they not more happy than men, but they are even less happy because of the perpetual bondage of their

1 *Enneads* 4.3,12.

bodies. Nor could he[2] have meant it to be supposed that by any progress in piety or wisdom the demons become gods, even though he openly declared that demons are eternal.

Chapter 11

What Apuleius does say is that the souls of men are demons and that they become, as a reward, Lares; or, as a punishment, Lemures or Larvae; and, if it is uncertain whether they have behaved well or ill, they are called, as gods, Manes.[1] It is impossible not to see, if one reflects for a moment, what a whirlpool this opinion of the Platonists opens up for all who choose to pursue a corrupt way of life. For, however evil men may have been, so long as they believe they are going to become either Larvae or divine Manes, they will grow in wickedness the more they crave to injure others. Indeed, they may even suppose that they will be solicited, by certain sacrifices comparable to divine honors, to work harm after death. For, certainly, Plotinus maintains that the Larvae are men transformed into harmful demons. But this raises another question. That is why he also says that, in Greek, the blessed are called *eudaímones,* because their souls, that is to say, their demons, are good. This statement confirms his opinion that the souls of men are demons.

Chapter 12

For the moment, however, we are discussing those demons midway between gods and men, whose special nature Apuleius

2 'He' refers to Apuleius. Cf. Ch.8, above.

1 *De Deo Socratis* 14.

has defined as belonging to the genus animal, with a mind endowed with reason, a soul subject to passion, a body that is aerial, and an existence that is eternal.[1] Now, when he first distinguished the gods in high heaven from men below on earth, both by reason of their abodes and the different dignity of their natures, he concluded by saying: 'You have here two kinds of animals, gods and men, the former differing greatly from the latter by the sublimity of their abode, the perpetuity of their life, the perfection of their nature. Thus, there can be no immediate communication of one with the other: first, because of the great difference in height between the loftiest and the lowest of abodes; then, because heavenly life is eternal and indefectible, while on earth it is transitory and precarious; and, third, because it is the nature of gods to be raised to blessedness and of men to be reduced to misery.'[2]

Here, I find three pairs of contrary qualities applied to the two extremes in the order of nature, the highest and the lowest. For, when he had indicated three characteristics in praise of the gods, he repeated them in such a way as to bring out the qualities in men. The three attributes of the gods are: sublimity of abode, perpetuity of life, and perfection of nature. These he repeated, with a change in words, to bring out three opposite attributes in human nature. Because he had mentioned sublimity of abode, he speaks of the great difference in height between the loftiest and the lowest of abodes; and because he had spoken of perpetuity of life, he repeated that heavenly life is eternal and indefectible, while on earth it is transitory and precarious; and because he had referred to the perfection of nature, he added this contrast: 'It is the nature of gods to be raised to blessedness and of men to be reduced

1 *De Deo Socratis* 12.
2 *Ibid.* 4.

to misery.' Thus, he has enumerated three attributes of the gods: loftiness, eternity, and blessedness; and three antithetical attributes in men: lowliness, mortality, misery.

Chapter 13

Since Apuleius gives the demons a position which is intermediary between gods and men, there can be no controversy concerning one of the three pairs of antitheses. For, to be sure, the position between the highest and the lowest is properly considered and called intermediary. In regard to the remaining pairs, a more careful attention must be paid, if we are to show either that the qualities are inconsistent with the nature of demons or that they are attributed to them in the degree demanded by their intermediate position. Now, these qualities cannot be inconsistent with their nature. For, although we say that the middle place is neither the highest nor the lowest, we cannot say that demons—since they are rational animals—are neither happy nor unhappy, like insensible plants or irrational animals.

Beings whose minds are endowed with reason are, of necessity, either happy or unhappy. Nor can we rightly say that demons are neither mortal nor immortal. For, all living things either live on forever or they end their life in death. And, indeed, our philosopher has already said that demons are eternal in their duration. Consequently, we must conclude that these mediators share one of the two highest attributes with the gods and one of the two lowest with men. For, if they shared both of the lowest or both of the highest, they would no longer be intermediaries, but would be either more like gods or more like men. But since, as has been shown, they must have a share in both of these pairs of qualities, it follows that they

will maintain their middle place only on condition that they share one quality from each pair. And, furthermore, since they cannot receive eternity from below as it is not there, they must acquire it from above. Consequently, to complete their role of mediator, there is only one attribute left for them to share in and that is unhappiness with men.

Thus, according to Platonists, gods who inhabit the highest region of the world are characterized by a happy eternity or an eternal happiness; men who dwell in the lowest region, by a mortal unhappiness or unhappy mortality; demons who are halfway between the two, by an unhappy eternity or an eternal unhappiness. As for the five characteristics in Apuleius' definition,[1] he did not prove from them, as he promised to do, that the demons are in an intermediate position. For he ascribed to them three endowments in common with man—an animal nature, a rational mind, a passionate soul; but only one in common with gods—their eternity; and one, proper to themselves—an aerial body.

How, then, can they be intermediaries, since they share one characteristic with the highest beings and three with the lowest? Obviously, they cease to be intermediaries the more they lean and fall in the direction of the lowest. But, of course, the half-way position can be defended by saying that they have one special characteristic, an aerial body, just as each of the highest and the lowest beings has, the gods an ethereal body and men an earthly, and that two characteristics are common to all three, namely, an animal nature and a rational mind. For, Apuleius himself, in speaking of gods and men, said: 'You have two animal natures,'[2] and no Platonists recognize any beings as gods unless they are rational.

1 Cf. above, 9.8.
2 *De Deo Socratis* 4.

Two attributes remain: a passible soul and an eternal duration. One of these they share with the lowest beings, the other with the highest, in such a way that they are perfectly poised in the middle, neither drawn up toward heaven nor pressed down toward earth. This situation, in fact, is what constitutes their unhappy eternity or their eternal unhappiness. For, the one who said that the demons had 'passible souls' would have said 'unhappy souls,' had he not been ashamed on account of their worshipers. Moreover, since the universe is ruled not by irresponsible chance but by the providence of a supreme God, as even these philosophers themselves confess, never would the unhappiness of the demons have been eternal had not their malice been extreme.

If, therefore, the blessed are correctly called *eudaímones,* then these demons, whom the philosophers place halfway between men and gods, are not *eudaímones.*[3] What, then, is the position of good demons who are higher than men but lower than gods and offer succor to the former and service to the latter? For, if they are both good and eternal, most certainly they are also happy. However, eternal beatitude makes a halfway position impossible because it unites them closely with golds and severs them widely from men.

Therefore, in vain will these philosophers attempt to prove that good demons, if both eternal and blessed, may rightly be reckoned as intermediaries between happy, immortal gods and unhappy, mortal men. For, if they share with the gods the two attributes of beatitude and immortality and have nothing of these in common with mortal and afflicted human beings, must they rather not be aloof from men and close to gods than somewhere half-way between them?

For, only then would they be in the middle on the con-

3 . . . *eudaemones, non sunt eudaemones daemones* . . .

dition that both qualities were not shared either with gods or men but that one was shared with men and one with gods. This is the way in which man is half-way between beasts and angels, the former being irrational and mortal while the latter are rational and immortal, with man, a rational mortal animal, in between, lower than the angels and higher than the beasts, sharing mortality with the latter and rationality with the former. Therefore, in like manner, when we are looking for a middle term between blissful immortals and unhappy mortals, we must light upon a being which, though mortal, is happy or, though immortal, is unhappy.

Chapter 14

A much discussed question among men is this: Can man at the same time be both mortal and happy? Some philosophers, taking a more humble view of man's condition, have denied that he can be blessed while still in mortal life. Others have exalted his state and have dared to say that the man who possesses wisdom, although mortal, can be happy.

But, if this be true, why are not these wise men established as mediators between unhappy mortals and happy immortals, since they share blessedness with the latter and mortality with the former? For, certainly, if they enjoy beatitude, they can envy no one—envy being the very root of wretchedness—and, therefore, they are whole-hearted in helping unfortunate mortals to share their beatitude, even to the point of being immortal after death and being united with the happy and immortal angels.

Chapter 15

But, if it be inevitable that all men, so long as they are mortal, must also be miserable—a contention far more credible and probable—then we must seek a mediator who is not only human, but also divine, in order that, by the intervention of His blessed mortality, men may be led from their mortal misery to a blessed immortality. It was necessary for this mediator to become, but not to remain, mortal. Indeed, He became incarnate not by any diminution of the divinity of the Word but by assuming the frailty of flesh. This flesh He raised from the dead, but He did not remain mortal in the flesh. The very fruit of His mediation is precisely this: that they for whose liberation He became a mediator should not remain forever subject even to the death of the flesh.

Thus, the mediator between men and God was to possess a passing mortality and an enduring beatitude, so that, by means of a passing element, He might be conformed to men who are mortal and then transport them from death to that which endures. Therefore, the good angels cannot be mediators between miserable mortals and happy immortals, because they, also, are both blessed and immortal; but the wicked angels can, because they are immortal like the blessed and unhappy like men.

Ranged against these is the good mediator, who, to oppose their immortality and misery, was willing to become mortal for a time though able to remain blessed for eternity. Thus, lest those proud immortals and miserable mischief-makers, by boasting of their immortality, should seduce men to misery, He, by the humility of His death and the benignity of His beatitude has destroyed their reign in those whose hearts He cleansed by faith and liberated from their unclean dominion.

What kind of medium, then, should miserable and mortal man, far removed from the blessed immortals, choose in order to reach a blessed immortality? All that could please him in the immortality of demons is misery and nothing that might offend him in the mortality of Christ any longer exists. We must beware, therefore, of eternal misery with demons, whereas, with Christ, death is not even to be feared, since it could not last forever, and happiness can be loved everlastingly.

Whenever the immortal and miserable mediator intervenes, it is to prevent men from attaining blessed immortality, since the demon's misery that prevents this is unending. But the reason why a mortal and blessed mediator intervened was in order that, having lived through His mortality, He might give to those subject to death, immortality—as He has shown by His resurrection—and, to the miserable, beatitude, which He Himself has never lost.

Therefore, the evil mediator who separates friends is altogether different from the good one who reconciles enemies. Now, the reason for the multitude of mediators who separate lies in the multitude of those who are blessed—and beatified by their participation in one God. It is the privation of this participation that makes the miserable multitude of evil angels oppose us as an impediment, rather than interpose as an aid in the attaining of this beatitude. And their multiplicity, too, in a certain sense, is an obstacle in the way of our reaching that one Supreme Beatitude, to reach which we needed not many but one mediator—*the* Mediator, in communion with whom alone we can be blessed, namely, the uncreated Word of God, by whom all things were created.

However, the fact that He is the Word is not the reason why He is a mediator; for, certainly, the Word at the summit of immortality and the apex of beatitude is far removed from miserable mortals. Rather, He is a mediator because He

is man, and as man shows us that to attain that supreme Good, blessed and beatific, we need not seek other mediators to serve like rungs on a ladder of ascent. For, the blessed God who makes us blessed, by deigning to share our humanity, showed us the shortest way to sharing in His divinity. Freeing us from mortality and misery, He leads us, not to the immortal blessed angels to become immortal and blessed by sharing in their nature, but to that Trinity in communion with which even the angels are blessed. When, then, in order to be mediator, He willed to take 'the nature of a slave'[1] below the angels,[2] He remained in the form of God above the angels, being at the same time the way of life on earth and life itself in heaven.

Chapter 16

Certainly, this statement of Plato, quoted by our Platonist, is not true: 'The gods do not mingle with men.'[1] He also says that it is this freedom from contamination by human contact which is the special privilege of their sublimity. Thus, he implies that the demons can be contaminated. Surely, therefore, they cannot purify those by whom they are defiled and, thus, both become equally unclean—demons by contact with men and men by worship of demons. On the other hand, if demons can come in contact and associate with men without being contaminated, then, indeed, they are superior to gods, since the latter, it is supposed, would be contaminated by contact. For, it is said to be a special privilege of the gods that,

1 Phil. 2.7.
2 Heb. 2.7,9.

1 *De Deo Socratis* 4.

because they are exalted and remote, contact with man cannot contaminate them.

However, he admitted that Plato declared that the supreme God, Creator of all things, whom we call the true God, is the only being who cannot be described, even remotely, in any language, because of the poverty of human speech; and that, even among the philosophers whose force of mind sometimes lifts their spirit as far as possible above matter, an understanding of God is but an intermittent glimmer, like a rapid flash of a dazzling light in utter darkness.[2]

Now, if the God who is supreme and above all things makes Himself known however rarely and rapidly, like a flash of light, by a certain intelligible and ineffable presence in the minds of the wise men, when their spirits are soaring above matter—if God does this and yet is not contaminated by men, why do the gods have to be placed far away in a lofty abode lest they be defiled by human contact?

The fact is, we need no argument but to look up and see those ethereal bodies which shine upon the earth and give it all the light it needs. For, consider: If the stars (all of which he considers to be visible gods) are not contaminated when they are looked at, then neither are the demons defiled by the gaze of men, however close the view may be. But, it may be argued, although the gaze of the eye does not contaminate these gods, the sound of the human voice would. That is why they put demons in between—to report the utterances of men to gods who remain aloof that they may keep themselves perfectly undefiled.

And so of the other senses. Take smell. Certainly, the gods —if they could come near enough—could not be contaminated by odors of living men. Nor can the demons—who are near enough—be contaminated if they are not defiled by the

2 *Ibid.* 3.

fumes of so many corpses offered up to them in sacrifice. As for the sense of taste, the gods have no urgency of mortality that they should feel the bite of hunger and beg of men for bread. As for contact by touch, that depends entirely upon them. Ordinarily, of course, the word 'contact' implies 'touching.' However, the gods, if they wished, could come in contact with men merely by seeing and being seen, hearing and being heard. What need, then, of touching? Humans would not dare to desire to do so, since they may find joy either in the sight or the conversation of the gods and of good demons. And even if curiosity should go so far as to desire it, how in the world could a human touch a god or demon against their will, since we cannot even touch a sparrow until it is caught?

Let us suppose, then, that the gods mingle corporally with men by seeing and being seen, by speaking and by hearing. But if, as I said before, demons can mingle in this manner without being contaminated while gods cannot, that is the same as saying that gods are defilable but demons are not. But if, on the contrary, demons, too, are contaminated, how can they assist men to secure a life of happiness after death? Defiled themselves, they cannot so purify men that they may present them spotless to the uncontaminated gods, between whom and men the demons have been constituted intermediaries. And, if demons do not render this service, then of what good to men is their friendly mediation?

Could the only result be, not that men, after death, ascend to the gods through the mediation of demons, but that both men and demons are condemned to share a common contamination without hope of happiness? Unless, perhaps, the suggestion be made that the devils cleanse like sponges or other absorbents—the more they wipe their human friends into spotlessness, the dirtier the demons become by this cleansing. If this be true, then the gods who have shunned the intimacy

and contact of men for fear of contamination deal with demons who are far more contaminated than men. Can gods really cleanse, without contamination, demons defiled by men, and yet be unable to render a like service to men? Could anyone conceive of such a thing unless the craftiest of demons had already deceived him?

But what of this? If to see and to be seen contaminates, how is it that the gods—whom Apuleius says are visible ('the most brilliant luminaries of the world'[3] and the lesser stars) —are seen by men, while demons escape this contamination because they can be seen only when they wish to be seen? However, if one is defiled not by being seen but by seeing, then these philosophers would have to pretend that these bright luminaries of the universe, held by them to be gods, do not behold men when they send down their rays as far as the earth. These rays are not contaminated, though they pass through all sorts of unclean objects, yet the gods would be defiled should they mingle with men, even though contact were necessary in order to aid them. The rays of the sun and moon come in contact with the earth, yet their light is not contaminated.

Chapter 17

I am much surprised that such learned men, who maintain that material and sensible things are secondary to immaterial and intelligible ones, should mention corporeal contact when there is a question of the life of beatitude. Have they forgotten that saying of Plotinus which runs: 'We must take flight to that far, far better fatherland where we shall find both a father and all things else. And by what fleet must we take

3 Virgil, *Georgics* 1.5,6.

flight? By becoming like God.'[1] Now, if nearness to God is measured by our likeness, then there is no other distance from God than that of dissimilarity; and the dissimilarity of man's soul to incorporeal, eternal, and immutable Being is measured by man's lust for the things that change and pass with time.

Since the passing and impure things of earth cannot approach the immortal purity of Heaven, there is, indeed, need of a mediator to bridge the chasm of unlikeness. However, this mediator should certainly not be one whose body is immortal like divinity while his soul is sick like men on earth—and sick with an envy that hinders rather than helps our healing. No, we need a Mediator at one with us on earth by the mortality of His body, yet at home in heaven by the immortal holiness of His spirit, measured not by proximity to God but by perfect likeness to God, and in virtue of which, for our purification and liberation, He affords us an aid that is truly divine.

And this incontaminable God was far indeed from fearing contamination from the human nature in which He clothed Himself, or from the men among whom, as a man, He lived. Among the salutary truths made manifest in His Incarnation these two are not the least important, namely, that true divinity cannot be defiled by flesh, and that evil spirits, merely because they are free from flesh, are not to be considered superior to men. Such, as Holy Scripture teaches, is the Mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus,[2] who by His divinity is always equal to the Father and by His humanity is made like to us. But this is not the place to pursue these points as fully as I might.

1 Augustine has apparently fused together two passages of Plotinus: *Enneads* 1.6,8 and 1.2.3.
2 1 Tim. 2.5.

Chapter 18

The demons, on the contrary, are false and deceptive mediators. They are miserable and malignant by reason of the uncleanness of their spirit, yet outstanding in much of what they do. They are masters of immense stretches of space by reason of the lightness of their aerial bodies, yet they strive to call and avert us from advancement of soul, and, instead of helping us on the way to God, they put hurdles in our way.

Indeed, this whole matter of a material way is entirely false and full of error. Righteousness takes no such road. For, it is not by physical loftiness but by spiritual likeness that we ascend to God.

However, imagine for a moment this material way which the friends of the demons arrange according to the hierarchy of the elements, with aerial demons midway between ethereal gods and terrestrial men. It is because of the interval of space, so it is believed, that the gods have the special privilege of not being contaminated by human contact. In this view, demons are defiled by men rather than men purified by demons, and even the gods could be contaminated were they not protected by the elevation of their abode.

Surely, no one is silly enough to believe in such a way of purification in which men defile, demons are defiled, and gods are subject to defilement. Who would not rather prefer a way in which contaminating demons are avoided and men are cleansed from contamination by an incontaminable God before entering the company of uncontaminated angels?

Chapter 19

If I am to avoid the appearance of disputing over words, I must say something at this point about good angels. The fact is that some of the demonolators, as I might call them, among whom is Labeo, pretend that what they call demons we call angels. They do not deny that angels exist, but they prefer to call them good demons.

Now, we Christians, relying on the language of Scripture, which is our norm, have learned that some of the angels are good and some bad, but we have never heard of good demons. But, wherever demons are mentioned in our Sacred Books (whether in the masculine or in the neuter), malignant spirits are meant. And this meaning has become so widely accepted even among people who are called pagans and who insist that many gods and demons should be worshiped that hardly any one, however educated and learned, would dream of praising even his slave in the words: 'You have a demon.' He would know perfectly well that the person addressed would consider the words as a curse.

It is, in fact, because practically everybody takes offense at the word demon, which is always understood in a bad sense, that we have to explain ourselves every time we use the word. Why, then, not avoid the offense caused by the word 'demon' by using the word 'angel'?

Chapter 20

However, in the light of Sacred Scripture, even the etymology of this word, 'demon,' teaches us an important fact worth knowing. The demons—the word is Greek[1]—are so called

1 Cf. Plato, *Cratylus* p. 398B, *daémōn*, knowing.'

because of their knowledge. Now the Apostle, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says: 'Knowledge puffs up but charity edifies.'[2] He can only mean that knowledge does good only in company with charity; otherwise, it merely puffs a man into pride, swelling him, like a balloon, with a valueless volume of air.

The demons, then, have knowledge without charity, and, hence, are so inflated, that is, so proud, that they have plotted and planned to get done all they can to exact for themselves those divine honors and religious observances which they know are rightfully due to the true God alone. They continue to do so as far as their power and influence extend. But, to this pride of the demons, by which the human race, as a just punishment, has been held in captivity, is opposed the power of the humility of God which appeared in Christ. However, the souls of men have failed to realize its greatness because, inflated by the impurity of self-exaltation, they are like demons —if not in knowledge at least in pride.

Chapter 21

However, the demons themselves know this power so well that they said to the Lord, clothed as He was with the infirmity of our flesh: 'What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Hast Thou come to destroy us?'[1] These words clearly show that they had great knowledge but no charity, for they knew enough to fear His punishment, but for His holiness they had no love. He let Himself be known, indeed, but only in the measure that He wished; and He wished only in the measure that was necessary. He never made Himself

2 1 Cor. 8.1.

1 Mark 1.24.

known as He does to the holy angels who rejoice in the participation of His eternity as the Word of God; but only such knowledge was granted as was needed to terrify the demons from whose tyranny He was to liberate those who were predestined for His kingdom and for an eternally true and truly eternal glory.

He let Himself be known to the demons, not as the source of eternal life and of the unchangeable light which illumines the saints and purifies our hearts when we see it by our faith in Him, but only by certain temporal effects and mysterious signs of His power and presence, which are more readily perceived by the angelic senses of these malignant spirits than by us weak human beings.

When at last He decided to make these signs somewhat less obvious and to keep Himself more hidden, the prince of demons was left in doubt and tempted Him to find out whether or not He were Christ. It was He who permitted Himself to be tempted and that only because He wished the human nature He had assumed to serve as an example for our imitation. After that temptation, as Scripture says: 'angels came and ministered to Him'[2]—of course, good and holy ones who could keep unclean spirits in fear and trembling. Thereafter, He revealed to the demons more and more His power, and, although the infirmity of His flesh seemed contemptible to them, none of them dared to disobey Him.

Chapter 22

Now, to God's good angels all this knowledge of merely material and temporal reality which so inflates the demons seems of little value. It is not that they lack such knowledge;

2 Matt. 4.11.

it is because they love that Love of God which makes them holy. They are so on fire with a holy love of God's beauty, so spiritual, unchangeable, and ineffable, that they hold in disdain all things—including themselves—which are less than divine, so that, with every grace that makes them good, they may rejoice in the Giver of all goodness, God.

Actually, their knowledge even of the world of time and change is greater than the demons' because, in the Word of God, through whom the world was made, they contemplate the ultimate reasons why, in the cosmic order, some things can be used while others are refused, and nothing is confused.[1] Demons, on the contrary, do not contemplate, in the wisdom of God, eternal causes—those hinges, as it were, on which history hangs. If they can foresee much more of the future than men, it is only because, by longer experience, they have learned to decipher signals which mean nothing to us. Often enough, their predictions are merely pre-announcements of what they are planning to do.[2]

Finally, demons are often wholly mistaken; the angels, never. It is one thing to predict historical events or scientific progress on the basis of human or physical phenomena, and even to play the part, which demons are allowed to play, of affecting such events and progress by their will and power. It is something quite different to foresee, in the living laws of God's eternal and unchangeable Wisdom, the historical future and to know, by a participation in the Divine Spirit, that most infallible of all causes, God's will. The special privilege of such knowledge God has rightly reserved to the holy angels. Thus, they are not only eternal but also blessed. And the good which gives them blessedness is God Himself

1 . . . *quaedam probantur, quaedam reprobantur, cuncta ordinantur.*
2 Cf. 10.32.

who created them, for their perfect and unfailing bliss is to share in the Vision of God.

Chapter 23

If the Platonists prefer to call these angels gods rather than demons and to number them among the gods who, according to Plato, their founder and master, were created by the Supreme God,[1] they are welcome to do so, and I shall not bother them with a battle over words. And if they admit that, though blessed, they are so not intrinsically but only by their union with God by whom they were created, then they are saying what we say, whatever the name they may give to the angels.

Now, that this is the opinion of all Platonists or, at least, of the best of them can be shown by their writings. But, regarding the name itself, the fact that they give the name 'god' to such an immortal and blessed creature is hardly reason for quarreling with them, since in our own Scriptures we read: 'The God of gods, the Lord hath spoken';[2] and elsewhere: 'Praise ye the God of gods';[3] and again: 'a great King above all gods.'[4] And when it is said 'He is to be feared above all gods,'[5] the explanation is immediately added: 'For all the gods of the Gentiles are demons: but the Lord made the heavens.' Note that it says not just 'Above all gods,' but adds: 'of the Gentiles.' The meaning is 'above those whom the pagans regard as gods,' that is, the demons. God is 'to be feared' with that terror which made the demons cry out to the Lord:

1 *Timaeus*, p. 41A.
2 Ps. 49.1.
3 Ps. 135.2.
4 Ps. 94.3.
5 Ps. 95.4,5.

'Hast thou come to destroy us?'[6] But the expression, 'God of gods,' cannot be interpreted as the god of demons, and it would be absurd to take 'a great King above all gods' as meaning a great King above all demons.

Our Scripture also gives the name 'gods' to men who belong to the people of God: 'I have said: you are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High.'[7] Hence, 'the God of gods' can be taken to mean 'the God of God's people.' So, too, with the expression, 'a great King above all gods.'

However, there is one question that calls for an answer. If men are called gods because they belong to the chosen people to whom God speaks through either angels or men, are not those immortal spirits much more worthy of that name who already enjoy that beatitude which men merely hope to attain by worshiping God? The answer is this. Sacred Scripture gives the name 'gods' more expressly to men than to the immortal and blessed angels (with whom we have been promised equality after the resurrection) because the perfection of the angels is such that in the weakness of our faith we might be tempted to choose one of them as our god, whereas the temptation to make a man into a god is easily overcome.

Moreover, it is more proper that men belonging to the people of God should be called gods in order to make them certain and confident that He is *their* God who is called the 'God of gods.' The blessed and immortal angels in heaven might be called gods, but never 'gods of gods,' that is, never the gods of the men who form the people of God and to whom it was said: 'I have said: you are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High.' That is what the Apostle writes: 'For even if there are what are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (for indeed there are many gods and many lords),

6 Mark 1.24.
7 Ps. 81.6.

yet for us there is only one God, the Father from whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.'[8]

Consequently, there is little need to dispute about the name, since the thing itself is so clear that not a shadow of uncertainty remains. However, what displeases the Platonists is that we give the name of angels to those immortal and blessed spirits who have been sent to announce the will of God to men. They believe that this ministry is carried on not by those whom they call gods and who are both immortal and blessed, but by demons, whom they do not care to call blessed although they believe them to be immortal, or, if they are both blessed and immortal, certainly they are no more than good demons, not gods in the sense of dwelling on high, far removed from human contact. Although this may seem mere wrangling over a name, the fact remains that demon is so detestable a word that we must, by all means, avoid connecting it with holy angels.

At any rate, let us now conclude this Book with the conviction, first, that no created spirits, however immortal and blessed and whatever they are called, can ever be constituted as mediators for the purpose of leading to immortal beatitude unhappy mortals from whom they are separated by a double dissimilarity; and, second, that those creatures who are in an intermediate position, sharing immortality with beings above them and misery with beings below them—for misery is the mark of their malice—are more likely to envy than to offer us a beatitude which they do not possess. Hence the conclusion: The friends of the demons can offer us no cogent reason why we ought to honor them as protectors rather than avoid them as deceivers.

There remain those spirits who are good and, therefore,

8 1 Cor. 8.5,6.

immortal and blessed, and whom, under the name of gods, the Platonists think should be reverenced by religious worship and sacrifices in order to attain happiness after death. Whatever their nature and whatever their proper name, they desire no such religious homage for themselves, but only for the one God by whom they were created and in communion with whom they are blessed. That this is so, I shall show, with God's grace, more at length in the following Book.

BOOK TEN

Chapter 1

THAT ALL MEN wish to be happy is a certitude for anyone who can think. But, so long as human intelligence remains incapable of deciding which men are happy and how they become so, endless controversies arise in which philosophers waste their time and toil. But it would be tedious and futile to recall and examine these battles here. The reader will remember what I said in Book VIII,[1] when making a choice of philosophers with whom to discuss the question of beatitude after death and whether it is to be attained by serving the one true God and Creator of gods, or by worshiping many gods. He will not expect to find the same things repeated here. If the reader has forgotten, he can easily refresh his memory by a second reading.

It will be recalled that I selected the Platonists, who are deservedly considered the outstanding philosophers, first, because they could see that not even the soul of man, immortal and rational (or intellectual) as it is, can attain happiness apart from the Light of that God by whom both itself and the world were made, and, second, because they hold that the blessed life which all men seek can be found only by him who, in the purity of a chaste love, embraces that one Supreme Good which is the unchangeable God.

1 Cf. above, 8.5.

However, even these philosophers, whether through yielding to popular superstition or, as the Apostle says, through 'growing vain in their reasonings,'[2] also believed—or wanted others to believe—in polytheism. At any rate, some of them went so far as to think that the divine honors of rites and sacrifices should be offered to demons—an opinion which I have already refuted at some length.

It is time, therefore, to take a look, as far as with God's help we may, at those immortal and blessed spirits established in Heaven as Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, and Powers. The Platonists call them gods or, at least, good demons or even, like us, angels. We must ask in what sense it is credible that they should desire from us any kind of religious devotion. The precise point at issue is whether they wish for themselves or only for their God, who is also ours, the homage of our ceremonies and sacrifices and the consecration by religious rites of some of our goods or even of ourselves.

But this is the worship which we owe to the divinity, or, if I must speak more exactly, to the deity. However, since I do not find a sufficiently suitable Latin expression, I must use a Greek term to suggest in one word what I wish to say. Wherever the term *latreía* has been found in Sacred Scripture, our interpreters, I know, have translated it as service. But the service which is due to men and of which the Apostle speaks when he admonishes slaves to obey their master[3] is commonly called by another name in Greek,[4] whereas the term *latreía,* according to the usage of those who put divine revelation into human language, refers always or almost always to that service which pertains to the worship of God.

Consequently, if the service in question is called simply a

2 Rom. 1.21.
3 Eph. 6.5; Col.3.22.
4 *douleía.*

cult [*cultus*], it seems that it is not reserved for God alone. For we employ a similar word [*colere*] in reference to distinguished men whose memory or whose company we 'cultivate.' The word 'cult' refers to things to which we subject ourselves in a spirit of piety and religion, but we also 'cultivate' certain things which are subject to us. From the Latin word, *colere,* are derived such words as agriculturists, colonists, and *incolae,* that is, inhabitants. The pagan gods are spoken of as *caelicolae* not in the sense of venerating heaven by a cult but of inhabiting heaven like colonists. However, they are not called *coloni,* in the technical sense of those whose condition in their native land demands that they cultivate the soil under the authority of the owner, but in the sense in which it is used in a line of a great master of the Latin language: 'There was an ancient city, inhabited by Tyrian colonists,'[5] where 'colonists' means inhabitants, not tillers of the soil. So, too, colonies mean cities founded, like new hives of bees, by larger cities.

Thus, although it is certainly true that 'cult,' in its special sense of 'worship,' is due to God alone, yet, because the Latin *cultus* is used in many other ways, it cannot, when taken by itself, designate the worship due to God.

As for the word 'religion,' is usually means the cult which is rendered to God; hence, Latin translators render the Greek word, *thrēskeía,* by *religio*. Nevertheless, at least in Latin, not only the ignorant but the most educated persons use *religio* to express the binding force of blood relationships and affinities and other social ties. Hence, when there is a question of the cult of the deity, the word *religio* is ambiguous. If we make bold to say that *religio* means nothing else but the worship of God, then we seem to be rudely contradicting those who

5 Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.12.

use the word to signify the binding force of human relationships.

So, too, the word 'piety' (in Greek, *eusébeia*). In its strict sense, it ordinarily means the worship of God. However, it is also used to express a dutiful respect for parents. Moreover, in everyday speech, the word *pietas* means pity or mercy. This has come about, I think, because God commands us especially to practice mercy, declaring that it pleases Him as much as or even more than sacrifices. Hence, God himself is spoken of as *pius,* in the sense of merciful. However, the Greeks never call Him *eusebēs,* although ordinary people employ the word *eusébeia* in the sense of mercy. In certain passages of the Greek text of Scripture, to mark the distinction, *eusébeia* (reverence in general) is replaced by *theosébeia* (reverence to God). In Latin, there is no single word which expresses either one or the other of these ideas.

My point is that what in Greek is called *latreía* and in Latin *servitus* in the sense of the service of worshiping God; or what in Greek is called *thrēskeía* and in Latin *religio,* in the sense of religion binding us to God; or what the Greeks call *theosébeia,* meaning 'piety toward God' and for which there is no Latin equivalent—this is due exclusively to God who is the true God and who makes those who worship Him sharers in His divinity.[6]

Therefore, whoever they are, these immortal and blessed beings who dwell in heaven, if they do not love us and desire us to be happy, then, undoubtedly, we owe them no service; but, if they love us and desire our happiness, then, indeed, they will wish our happiness to flow from the same source as theirs. For, how could our happiness have any other source than theirs?

6 . . . *facitque suos cultores deos.*

Chapter 2

But, on this point, we have no dispute with these excellent philosophers. For they have borne manifold and abundant witness in their writings to their belief that these beings receive their happiness from the same source as we do—from the ray of a certain Intelligible Light which is the God of angels and is distinct from them, for only by this Light are they resplendent and only by participation in God are they established in perfection and beatitude.

Often, and with much insistence, Plotinus, developing the thought of Plato, asserts that even that being which they believe to be the soul of the universe receives its happiness from the same source as we do, namely, the Light which created the universal soul and is distinct from it and by reason of whose 'intelligible' illumination this soul is alight with intelligence. And to help us rise from the vast and visible bodies in the sky to the celestial 'intelligences,' he notices the analogy of the moon made luminous—in Platonic theory—by rays from the sun, as the spheres are alight with intelligence.[1]

This great Platonist, therefore, says that the rational (or, perhaps, better, the intellectual) soul—in which genus he includes the souls of those immortal and blessed spirits who are believed to inhabit the celestial dwellings—has no nature above it except that of God who fashioned the universe and created the soul itself, and that these heavenly beings receive their beatitude and their light for the understanding of truth from the same source as we do. In this belief, he is in agreement with the Gospel: 'There was a man, one sent from God, whose name was John. This man came as a witness, to bear witness concerning the Light, that all might believe through

1 *Enneads* 2.9,2,3; 5.1,3.

him. He was not himself the Light, but was to bear witness to the Light. It was the true Light that enlightens every man who comes into the world.'[2]

The distinction here made sufficiently shows that a rational or intellectual soul such as John's cannot be a light to itself but needs to be illumined by participation in the true Light. This is what John himself confesses in his witness to the Word: 'And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace.'[3]

Chapter 3

Since this is the case, if the Platonists and others like them who have a knowledge of God would only glorify Him as such and render Him thanks and not become vain in their thoughts, whether by starting errors among the people or by failing to correct them, surely they would acknowledge that, in order to be immortal and blessed, both immortal and blessed spirits and we miserable mortals must worship the one God of gods who is our God as well as theirs.

Both in outward signs and inner devtion, we owe to Him that service which the Greeks call *latreia.* Indeed, all of us together, and each one in particular, constitute His temple because He deigns to take for a dwelling both the community of all and the person of each individual. Nor is He greater in all than in each, since He cannot be extended by numbers nor diminished by being shared. When raised to Him, our heart becomes His altar; His only Son is the priest who wins for us His favor. It is only by the shedding of our blood in fighting for His truth that we offer Him bloody victims. We burn the sweetest incense in His sight when we are aflame with holy piety and love. As the best gifts we consecrate and

2 John 1.6-9.
3 John 1.16.

surrender to Him our very selves which He has given us. We dedicate and consecrate to Him the memory of His bounties by establishing appointed days as solemn feasts, lest, by the lapse of time, ingratitude and forgetfulness should steal upon us. On the altar of our heart, we offer to Him a sacrifice of humility and praise, aglow with the fire of charity.

In order to see Him as, one day, it will be possible to see and to cling to Him, we cleanse ourselves from every stain of sin and evil desire, sanctifying ourselves by His name. For He is the source of our happiness and the very end of all our aspirations. We elect Him, whom, by neglect, we lost. We offer Him our allegiance—for 'allegiance' and 'religion' are at root, the same.[1] We pursue Him with our love so that when we reach Him we may rest in perfect happiness in Him who is our goal. For our goal (or, as the philosophers in their endless disputes have termed it, our end or good) is nothing else than union with Him whose spiritual embrace, if I may so speak, can alone fecundate the intellectual soul and fill it with true virtue.

It is this Good which we are commanded to love with our whole heart, with our whole mind, and with all our strength. It is toward this Good that we should be led by those who love us, and toward this Good we should lead those whom we love. In this way, we fulfill the commandments on which depend the whole Law and the Prophets: 'Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind'; and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'[2] For, in order that a man might learn how to love himself, a standard was set to regulate all his actions on which his happiness depends. For, to love one's own self is nothing but to wish to be happy, and the standard is union with God.

1 *Hunc eligentes vel potius religentes (amiseramus enim negligentes) — hunc ergo religentes, unde et religio dicta perhibetur . . .*
2 Matt. 22.37,39.

When, therefore, a person who knows how to love himself is bidden to love his neighbor as himself, is he not, in effect, commanded to persuade others, as far as he can, to love God?

This, then, is the worship of God; this is true religion and the right kind of piety; this is the service that is due only to God. It follows, therefore, that if any immortal power, however highly endowed with virtue, loves us as itself, it must wish us to be subject, for our own happiness, to Him in submission to whom it finds its happiness. If, then, this spirit does not worship God, it is unhappy because deprived of God, and if it worships God, it cannot wish to be worshiped in place of Him. Rather will such a spirit acknowledge, in loving allegiance, that divine decision which runs: 'He that sacrificeth to gods, shall be put to death, save only to the Lord.'[3]

Chapter 4

Not to speak of the other rites of religion, by which homage is paid to God, certainly no one would dare say that we owe sacrifice to anyone but to Him. It is true that many ceremonies borrowed from divine worship have been misused in an unhealthy spirit of cringing or flattery in order to honor men. But this has been done in such a way that those who were worshiped and venerated or, in extreme cases, adored were always regarded as men. For no one has ever claimed to sacrifice except to that Being whom he knew or thought or pretended to be God. As to the antiquity of sacrificial worship, we have the evidence of the two brothers, Cain and Abel. God rejected that of the elder, while the sacrifice of the younger was accepted.

3 Exod. 22.20.

Chapter 5

Of course, no one is foolish enough to think that God has any need of the things that are offered in sacrifice. Holy Scripture is full of proof to the contrary. Not to be tedious, let one short text from the Psalms suffice: 'I have said to the Lord, thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods.'[1] Thus, we are to understand that God has no need of cattle or other material things of earth, not even of man's justice. In fact, it is man, not God, who benefits from the whole economy of worship.

Certainly, no one would say that he was benefiting a fountain by drinking, or the light by seeing It is true that, in former times, our fathers offered up animals as victims. However, today, we Christians who read about such sacrifices but do not imitate them understand them simply as symbols of the efforts we make to attain union with God and to assist our neighbor to the same end. A visible sacrifice, therefore, is a sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice. That is why the penitent in the Psalms—perhaps David means himself—who asks God to have mercy on his sins exclaims: 'For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it: with burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted. A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'[2]

Notice how the Prophet, in saying that God does not want sacrifice, shows that God does want it. What is meant is that God does not desire the sacrifice of a slaughtered animal, but rather the sacrifice of a contrite heart. Thus, what the Prophet says God does not want is a symbol of what He does. What the Prophet means is that such things do not please God in

1 Ps. 15.2.
2 Ps. 50.18,19.

the way that foolish people imagine, namely, to satisfy His pleasure. Of course, unless God had wanted sacrifices which seemed to minister to His pleasure, but which really symbolized the sacrifices that are truly pleasing to Him, such as a contrite heart humbled by the sorrow of repentance, then, indeed, in the Old Law, He would not have commanded such things to be offered to Him.

However, it was reason enough that they should be replaced in God's good time, lest it might be believed that such things in themselves were pleasing to God or as acceptable from us as what they symbolized. For this reason, in another psalm it is written: 'If I should be hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bullocks? or shall I drink the blood of goats?'[3] It is as if God were saying: 'Even if I needed such things, I would not ask of you what is already in my power.' The psalm continues by mentioning the realities symbolized: 'Offer to God the sacrifice of praise: and pay thy vows to the Most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.'[4]

So, too, through another inspired writer Holy Scripture says: 'What shall I offer to the Lord that is worthy? Wherewith shall I kneel before the high God? Shall I offer holocausts unto him, and calves of a year old? May the Lord be appeased with thousands of rams, or with many thousands of fat he-goats? Shall I give my first-born for my wickedness, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee: Verily to do judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk solicitous with thy God.'[5]

3 Ps. 49.12,13.
4 Ps. 49.14,15.
5 Mich. 6.6-8.

In the words of this Prophet, a distinction is clearly drawn between the fact that God does not require these sacrifices as they are in themselves and the fact that He does desire the offerings that are symbolized by these sacrifices. We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'And do not forget kindness and charity, for by such sacrifices God's favor is obtained.'[6] That is why the words, 'For I desired mercy and not sacrifice,'[7] must be understood to mean that one sacrifice is to be preferred to another, since what is commonly called a sacrifice is merely a symbol of the true sacrifice. For, mercy is the true sacrifice. Hence, the words just quoted: 'With such sacrifices is God pleased.'

All the divine precepts, therefore, which refer, under different forms, to sacrifices either in the service of the tabernacle or of the temple, are to be understood, in the light of symbolism, to refer to the love of God and neighbor. For, 'on these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'[8]

Chapter 6

There is, then, a true sacrifice in every work which unites us in a holy communion with God, that is, in every work that is aimed at that final Good in which alone we can be truly blessed. That is why even mercy shown to our fellow men is not a sacrifice unless it is done for God. A sacrifice, even though it is done or offered by man, is something divine—which is what the ancient Latins meant by the word *sacrificium*. For this reason, a man himself who is consecrated in

6 Heb. 13.16.
7 Osee 6.6.
8 Matt. 22.40.

the name of God and vowed to God is a sacrifice, inasmuch as he dies to the world that he may live for God. For, this is a part of that mercy which each one has on himself, according to the text: 'Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God.'[1]

Our body, too, is a sacrifice when, for God's sake, we chasten it, as we ought, by temperance, that is when we do not yield our members as 'instruments of iniquity unto sin,'[2] but as means of holiness to God. The Apostle exhorts us to this when he says: 'I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God—your spiritual service.'[3] If, then, the body, which is less than the soul and which the soul uses as a servant or a tool, is a sacrifice when it is used well and rightly for the service of God, how much more so is the soul when it offers itself to God so that, aflame in the fire of divine Love, and with the dross of worldly desire melted away, it is remolded into the unchangeable form of God and becomes beautiful in His sight by reason of the bounty of beauty which He has bestowed upon it. This is what the Apostle implies in the following verse: 'And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed in the newness of your mind, that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'[4]

Since, therefore, true sacrifices are works of mercy done to ourselves or our neighbor and directed to God, and since works of mercy are performed that we may be freed from misery and, thereby, be happy, and since happiness is only to be found in that Good of which it is said: 'But it is good for me to adhere to my God,'[5] it follows that the whole of

1 Eccli. 30.24.
2 Rom. 6.13.
3 Rom. 21.1.
4 Rom. 12.2.
5 Ps. 72.28.

that redeemed city, that is, the congregation or communion of saints, is offered as a universal sacrifice to God through the High Priest who, 'taking the form of a servant, offered Himself in His passion for us that we might be the body of so glorious a Head. For it was this 'form of a servant'[6] which He offered, it was in this form that He was the victim, since it is in 'the form of a servant' that He is Mediator, Priest and Sacrifice.

When, therefore, the Apostle had exhorted us to present our bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God—our spiritual service—and not to be conformed to this world but be transformed in the newness of our minds, that we might discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, he went on to remind us that it is we ourselves who constitute the whole sacrifice: 'By the grace that has been given to me, I say to each one among you: Let no one rate himself more than he ought, but let him rate himself according to moderation, and according as God has apportioned to each one the measure of faith. For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another. But we have gifts differing according to the grace that has been given us.'[7]

Such is the sacrifice of Christians: 'We, the many, are one body in Christ.' This is the Sacrifice, as the faithful understand, which the Church continues to celebrate in the sacrament of the altar, in which it is clear to the Church that she herself is offered in the very offering she makes to God.

6 Cf. Phil. 2.7.
7 Rom. 12.3-6.

Chapter 7

The immortal and blessed spirits who are deservedly established in heavenly abodes and rejoice in communion with their Creator are rooted in His eternity, certain in His truth, and sanctified by His grace. In their compassion they love us unhappy mortals and long for us to become both immortal and happy, and, therefore, they do not wish us to offer sacrifice to them but to God, knowing as they do that, along with us, they are His sacrifice. For we and they together form the one City of God to which the psalmist addressed the words: 'Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God,'[1] and of which our part is still on pilgrimage while the other part, the angels, help to guide us. It is from that city on high, where the will of God is the intelligible and immutable law, it is, if I may so speak, from that heavenly court where our case is in good hands that the angelic couriers carry down to us the Sacred Scripture, in which it is written: 'He that sacrificeth to gods, shall be put to death, save only to the Lord.'[2]

Such miracles have confirmed this Scripture, this law and these precepts, that there can be no doubt to whom these immortal and blessed spirits (who wish us to share what they possess) would have us offer sacrifice.

Chapter 8

Perhaps I shall seem needlessly tedious if I recall the very ancient miracles which have attested the truth of God's prom-

1 Ps. 86.3.
2 Exod. 22.20.

ise to Abraham, made thousands of years ago, that 'in his seed all nations would be blessed.'[1]

Take the miracle of the son borne to Abraham himself by his sterile wife who was already of such an age that not even though fecund could she have given birth to a child;[2] or of Abraham's sacrifice when a fire came down from heaven and ran between the separated victims;[3] or of the angels foretelling to Abraham the destruction of Sodom by fire from heaven,[4] after those angels, in human form, had been entertained by him and had revealed the promises of God concerning the birth of His son. And when this fire was about to strike, the angels, no less miraculously, rescued from Sodom Lot, the son of Abraham's brother,[5] though Lot's wife looked back as she went and was suddenly changed to salt.[6] Under the veil of a symbol, this was meant as a warning that no one on the way to salvation should long for those things which he has already left behind him.

Then, too, what extraordinary miracles were performed by Moses in his efforts to rescue the people of God from the yoke of slavery in Egypt! The magicians of Pharao, the king of Egypt who was tyrannizing over this people,[7] were permitted to accomplish certain wonders merely that they might be outdone by more genuine miracles. These magicians worked by the kind of sorceries and incantations to which evil spirits or demons are addicted, while Moses was powerful by his

1 Gen. 22.18.
2 Gen. 18.9-14.
3 Gen. 15.17.
4 Gen. 18.20.
5 Gen. 19.15-17.
6 Gen. 19.26.
7 Exod. 7.11,12; 8.7.

holiness and helped by the angels, and so, in the name of God, Creator of heaven and earth, he easily triumphed over them.

The magicians gave up at the third plague, whereas Moses, by a mighty exercise of mysterious power, brought ten plagues to completion. This broke the obduracy of heart shown by Pharao and the Egyptians, and the people of God were allowed to leave. However, the Egyptians, regretting their action, attempted to follow the departing Hebrews who were passing through the divided waters of the sea on dry land.[8] The Egyptians, caught between the closing walls of water that fell upon them, were overwhelmed.[9]

And what shall I say of those miracles of divine power which were multiplied so astonishingly while the people were led through the desert? Water which they were unable to drink lost its bitterness and quenched their thirst as soon as a piece of wood at a word from God was thrown into the water.[10] When the people were hungry, manna came down from heaven.[11] However, only a definite quantity was allowed to be gathered. Whatever was collected over and above putrefied with worms that issued from it,[12] except in the case of the double portion designated for the eve of the sabbath, it being forbidden to gather manna on the sabbath. This suffered no deterioration.[13] When the people were in need of meat for food and it seemed impossible to secure enough to satisfy so many people, their camp was found filled with birds, and appetite yielded to satiety.[14] The enemies who opposed them or forbade their march or attacked them in battle were over-

8 Exod. 14.21,22.
9 Exod. 14.27.
10 Exod. 15.23-25.
11 Exod. 16.14,15.
12 Exod. 16.16,20.
13 Exod. 16.22.
14 Exod. 16.11-13; Num. 11.21,22.

come, without the loss of a single Hebrew, because Moses prayed with his hands extended in the form of a cross.[15]

Then there were the miracles of the seditious among the people of God, who separated themselves from the divinely ordered community and were swallowed alive by the earth, as a visible token of an invisible punishment;[16] of the rock struck by a rod and gushing forth with an abundance of water for all;[17] of the deadly bites of serpents, inflicted as just punishment for sin, and healed when a brazen serpent was raised upon a wooden stake in sight of all,[18] so that not only did relief come to an afflicted people but the destruction of death by death was symbolized by this image of the crucifixion. This serpent was preserved intact in memory of the miracle, but, afterwards, was worshiped as an idol by the unfaithful people until king Ezechias, religiously using his power in the service of God, destroyed it and thus gained great renown for his piety.[19]

Chapter 9

These miracles, and many others of the same kind which would take too long to recall, occurred in order to encourage the worship of the one true God and to put a stop to polytheistic practices. Moreover, they were wrought by simple faith and pious trust, not by spells and incantations inspired by the sacrilegious curiosity of the art of magic—vulgarly called *goetia* and, more politely, theurgy.[1] The pretense here is that

15 Exod. 17.8-13.
16 Num. 16.31-33.
17 Exod. 17.6.
18 Num. 21.8,9.
19 4 Kings 18.4.

1 Cf. above, 7.35. For Plato's use of *goēteia*, cf. *Symposium*, p. 203A.

we should distinguish between those whom ordinary people call sorcerers, and who are to be condemned because they deal in illicit arts connected with necromancy, and those others whom we are supposed to praise as theurgical experts. The fact is that both are slaves of the same deceitful rites of demons passing under the name of angels.

Even Porphyry promises a kind of purgation of the soul by means of theurgy, though he does so reluctantly, as though he were ashamed, and he is firm in denying that the art can effect in anyone a return to God. You can see that he keeps vacillating between his passion for sacrilegious curiosity and his profession as a philosopher. At one moment he is warning us to avoid this art as being deceitful, dangerous to those who practice it, and forbidden by law; at another, he seems to yield to the advocates of magic and claims that is is useful for the purification of a part of the soul—not, of course, the intellectual part which conceives the truth of intelligible realities that have no sensible images, but the spiritual part which perceives the images of material things.

He explains that by means of certain theurgic consecrations, which are called *teletai* or mysteries, this spiritual part becomes suitably prepared for the friendship of spirits and angels and fit for visions of the gods. Nevertheless, he is disposed to confess that these theurgic mysteries do not operate any purification in the intellectual soul which would prepare it to behold its God and to perceive the realities that truly exist —an admission, surely, that helps us to understand the kind of gods involved in theurgic consecrations, and the value of a vision in which true realities remain unseen.

Finally, he maintains that the rational or, as he prefers to call it, the intellectual soul can take flights to heaven even though its spiritual part has not been purged by any theurgic

art. Furthermore, he confesses that the spiritual part may not be so purified by a theurgical expert as to be able to attain immortality and eternity. Thus, although he distinguishes demons from angels, explaining that the natural place of the former is in the air and that of the latter in the ether or empyrean, and, although he advises us to cultivate the friendship of some demon who can help us to rise at least a little from the earth after death (without, of course, admitting that in any such way we can reach the heavenly company of the angels), nevertheless, he explicitly warns us to avoid the society of demons in a passage where he says that the soul undergoing punishment after death dreads to recall the worship of demons by whom it was ensnared. And, as to theurgy itself, which he commends for fostering our union with angels and gods, he cannot deny its dealings with certain powers which envy the soul its purity or, at any rate, abet the arts of others who are envious. In this connection he reports the following of a certain Chaldaean: 'A good man in Chaldaea complains this his great efforts to purify his soul were frustrated because an expert in theurgy who was envious of his purity had bound and conjured the powers by magical prayers not to grant his request—with the result that what one bound the other could not loose.'

From this evidence, he concludes, it appears that theurgy is a science that works both good and ill among both men and gods, and that even the gods can and do experience those perturbations and passions which Apuleius attributes to men and demons. However, Porphyry separates the gods from the demons by a doctrine of the sublimity of the gods' ethereal abode, which he borrowed from Plato.

Chapter 10

Here, then, we have another Platonist, Porphyry, who is said to be even more learned than Apuleius, claiming that some kind of theurgic craft can effect even the gods with passions and perturbations; for they were so terrified by adjurations and incantations as to be unable to grant the purification of a soul, and were so frightened by the man whose demand was evil that they could do nothing for the one whose prayer was good—so helpless was theurgy to banish their fear and free them for the bestowal of favors.

Surely, if any one is unable to see in all this the concoctions of deceiving demons, he must be a pitiable slave of the devils and a stranger to the grace of the true Redeemer. For, if the Chaldaean had been dealing with good gods, then the man of good will seeking to purify his soul certainly would have had much more influence with them than that evil-doer trying to impede him. Or, if the gods were just and considered the man worthy of the purification he desired, they should have refused his request, not because terrified by the envious man nor impeded, as Porphyry implies, by any fear of a more powerful divinity, but because they were free to refuse the request.

What is remarkable is that this good Chaldaean who wished to purify his soul by theurgic rites failed to find a higher god who could either give the gods a worse frightening and so make them do good, or else stop the man from frightening them so that they could freely bestow their favor. Perhaps the real trouble was that the good theurgist knew no incantations to purge the gods of fear before he invoked them for the purification of his soul!

For, how in the world can there be a more powerful god to terrify the lesser gods but none who can be counted on to

purify them? Can a god be found to heed an envious man and strike terror into lesser gods and so prevent them from doing good and yet no god be discovered who will heed the prayers of a man of good will and free these gods from fear so that they can do good? What marvelous theurgy and what admirable purification where envy has more power to command the gods than goodness to commend its purest prayers![1] The moral is that we should hate and shun the wiles of wicked spirits and listen to the lessons of salvation.

As to what is said about those who perform these impure purifications by irreligious rites reaching, in a kind of mystical rapture, to marvelously beautiful visions of angels or of gods —if they really do have any such visions—all this is just what the Apostle had in mind when he wrote: 'And no wonder, for Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light.'[2] For, these illusions are apparitions of that spirit who seeks to ensnare unhappy souls in the deceptive rites of a multitude of false gods and to turn them aside from the true worship of the true God by whom alone they can be purified and healed. For Satan, as was said of Proteus, 'turns himself into all shapes,'[3] overtly aiding us, covertly raiding us, always a traitor at heart.[4]

Chapter 11

Porphyry showed more discernment in a letter to Anebo, the Egyptian, in which he assumes the character of an inquirer only to expose the baselessness of these sacrilegious arts. One of his arguments for repudiating all demons is that they fool-

1 . . . *plus imperat inmunda invidentia, quam impetrat pura beneficentia.*
2 2 Cor. 11.14.
3 Virgil, *Georg.* 4.411.
4 . . . *hostiliter insequens, fallaciter subveniens, utrobique nocens.*

ishly allow themselves to bring on humidity, thus revealing that their proper abode is in the sphere of the moon or in the air below it and not in the ether. Nevertheless, he does not dare to attribute to all the demons those deceptions, villainies, and absurdities by which he is rightly revolted. For he yields to public opinions in calling some of the demons benignant, although, in general, he admits that all of them are lacking in discretion.

He expresses astonishment that the gods should be not merely pleased to accept men's sacrifices but compelled to do what men demand. He also argues that, since gods are distinguished from demons by having no bodies while the latter do, neither the sun nor moon nor other visible bodies in the heavens, which are undoubtedly corporeal, can be considered gods.[1] And he asks how, if they are gods, some can be called beneficent and others maleficent, and how, since they are incorporeal, they can be united to corporeal objects.

Feigning doubt, he further inquires whether diviners and wonder workers are men of peculiar mental powers or whether they are aided by spirits from without. He inclines to the latter opinion on the ground that it is by the use of stones and herbs that they lay spells on people, open closed doors, or work similar wonders. That is why, he says, some people believe that there is a special kind of demon with an itch to hear men's prayers, a kind with a genius for deceit, chameleon-like in taking on the appearances of gods or demons or souls of the dead, and that this is the kind which works these wonders which are merely in appearance good or bad. But, when a man asks for something that is truly good, they do not help him. In fact, they have no knowledge of virtue and, when they find a man earnestly seeking for it, they lead him astray by pretending that evil is good and virtue is bad. Full

1 Cf. above, 7.16.

of arrogance and pride, they take pleasure in sacrificial odors and are captivated by flattery.

This and much else Porphyry mentions as being characteristic of the brood of deceitful and malicious spirits who come from without and insinuate themselves into the minds and senses of men to delude them whether they are asleep or awake. He writes like a man who is not entirely convinced, subtly suggesting his own doubts and suspicions by referring to the opinions of others.

I suppose it would be asking too much for a great philosopher to know much about, or to denounce, that whole gang of devils which any old woman who is a Christian unhesatatingly admits and unreservedly detests. Or, perhaps, he was too much of a gentleman to offend Anebo, to whom he was writing and who was a Grand Master of those mysteries, or any of those others who marvel at magic as a work of God and near allied to worship.

However, he goes on, still under the guise of a questioner, to mention some things which no sober judgment could attribute to any but malign and deceitful powers. He wonders how it is that, after spirits have been invoked as though they were of the better kind, they are commanded, as if they were the worst, to carry out the unjust orders of a man, and why they exact purity from their suppliants, though they do not hesitate to tempt men to all sorts of illicit unions. He is surprised that the demons insist on their priests abstaining from meat for fear of pollution by bodily exhalations, while the demons themselves delight in the fumes and stench of sacrifices, and that an observer of the mysteries must never touch dead bodies, although these are the very center of many of the celebrations. Porphyry is puzzled that a man, however vicious, can curse not merely a demon or a departed soul but even the sun or moon or other heavenly body and can

frighten them with his fancies into giving him a favor that is real. For example, a man threatens to smash the heavens or do something equally impossible, and the gods, frightened like foolish children with such false and ridiculous threats, do what they are told.

Porphyry tells the story of a man called Chaeremon,[2] who was a master of those sacred or, rather, sacrilegious rites, and who wrote that the famous Egyptian mysteries of Isis and her husband Osiris were exceptionally powerful in compelling the gods to grant human requests, if only the person performing the incantations threatened to divulge or to destroy the mysteries, and yelled at the top of his voice that he would even tear Osiris to pieces if they refused to obey his orders.

No wonder Porphyry was astonished that vain and insane threats of this kind, thrown at the very gods of heaven who are radiant with starry light, were not without effect, but compelled the gods by power and forced them by fear to do what the man demanded. The fact is that, for all his air of astonished curiosity, he makes it clear that in all this magic the real agents are the kind of spirits he described above under cover of others' opinion. Only, they are not, as he says, merely deceitful by nature; they are deceitful by perversity when they pretend to be gods and the souls of the dead. He says they do not pretend to be demons—but that is what they are.

As to his notion that, out of herbs, stones, animals, noises, incantations, drawings, intricate designs or even observations of certain movements of the stars in the revolutions of the sky, men on earth can forge effective powers for various purposes—all this is but a demoniacal bag of tricks played on captured souls and befuddled minds for the pleasure and fun of the demons.

2 Cf. *De abstinentia ab esu animalium* 4.6.

Either, then, Porphyry was sincere in his doubts and inquiries, making a point of picking such phenomena as could cogently and irrefutably be shown to be the work, not of powers which assist us in striving for beatitude, but of deceptive demons; or else, more in accord with his character as a philosopher, he preferred to address himself in this way to the good Egyptian, who had a very high opinion of his own fancies, and may have wished to avoid offences by a parade of dogmatic authority and the irritation of open opposition. By playing the humble role of a questioner and learner he may have hoped to persuade the Egyptian to reflect on these tricks and to realize how strongly they should be reproved and, therefore, repudiated.

Finally, toward the close of his letter, Porphyry begs to be taught the way to happiness according to the wisdom of the Egyptians. He insists, however, that if the only purpose of their religion is to importune the divine intelligence for aid in tracking down a runaway slave, buying a farm, taking a wife, making a bargain, or things of that sort, then their pursuit of wisdom has been vain; and that, since those divinities to whom they prayed have been content to predict the truth in many matters without ever a word of advice that was either prudent or practical concerning beatitude, they can be neither gods nor good demons, but must be either spirits of deceit or merely creations of human fancy.

Chapter 12

The fact remains that many extraordinary phenomena far beyond the limits of human power can be attributed to magical arts. The only safe conclusion is that all such predictions and prodigies, which seem miraculous and divine and yet

have no reference to the worship of one God in union with whom, as even the Platonists abundantly testify, all blessedness is found, are merely the tricks and traps of malignant demons, which can only be countered by true religion.

On the other hand, when miracles wrought by the ministry of angels or in any other way are so manifestly divine that they foster in us the worship and religion of the one true God in whom alone is happiness, then we ought to believe that they have been wrought by or through those who love us with a supernatural charity (according to truth and piety) and that the real author is God Himself working in them.

It is no argument to say that an invisible God does not work visible miracles. Those who talk that way admit that the invisible God made the world, and, surely, that is visible enough. Besides, what are all the miracles the world has ever seen compared to the universe of sky and earth and all that they contain—which God assuredly created. However, just as the Maker remains hidden and incomprehensible to man, so is the manner of His making it. Much, therefore, as the miracle of visible creation loses its wonder by being always before our eyes, nevertheless, when we contemplate it with the eyes of a philosopher, we see in it a miracle beyond the rarest and most extraordinary marvels. And man himself is a greater miracle than any marvel he performs.

It is a fact, then, that God, who created the visible heaven and earth, deigns to perform visible miracles in heaven and on earth so that the soul so fixed on what it can see may be stirred to adore Him who cannot be seen. Of course, the places and times, fixed by immutable decree, are His secret by whose providence future events are ordered as if they were actually taking place. For, He who moves things temporal does not change with time, and it is by one and the same act that He knows what is future and what is past, that He

answers those who are calling upon Him and sees those who will invoke Him in the future. When His angels listen to us, it is He who is listening, for He is present in them, in His true temple not made by hands, as He is present in His saints; and His answers which are made to us in time have been decreed from all eternity.

Chapter 13

It is recorded in Scripture that, often enough, God appeared visibly to men although He Himself is invisible. This is not more surprising than that a thought which is inaudible in the mind should be heard as a sound. The sound is not the thought, any more than the form, in which the invisible God is seen, is God. Nevertheless, just as truly as a thought is heard in the sound of a word, so was God seen in a bodily form; and the patriarchs knew that it was the invisible God they saw, although they saw Him in a bodily form which was not God.

Moses, for example, carried on a conversation with God. Yet, he made this request: 'If I have found favour in thy sight, show me thy very self that I may know that I am seeing thee.'[1]

It is not surprising, then, that the Law of God should be given in a terrifying way, through the proclamation of angels,[2] since it was meant not for one man alone nor for a few philosophers, but for an entire nation and an immense people. Hence, great prodigies occurred, in the sight of the people, on the mountain where the Law was given. A single man re-

1 Cf. Exod. 33.13. St. Augustine's text, unlike the Vulgate, runs: *ostende mihi temetipsum, scienter ut videam te.*
2 Acts 7.53.

ceived the Law, but the multitude witnessed the frightening and formidable spectacles that took place. Thus, the people of Israel believed Moses in a way different from that in which the Spartans believed Lycurgus when he claimed that he had received from Jove or Apollo the laws which he established. The Law that commanded the worship of one God was communicated to the people amid stupendous signs and extraordinary earthquakes observed by all, and Divine Providence dispensed these marvels in a way to make manifest that all creation was at the service of the Creator in the proclamation of His Law.

Chapter 14

The education of the human race or, at least, of the people of God, like that of a single person, was progressive, so that, as epoch followed epoch, like the years of life, men progressed from an understanding of the temporal and the tangible to that of the eternal and invisible realities. Yet, even while God's promises were material rewards, the people were taught to worship one God alone, and thus the human mind was trained to recognize that even the material benefits of this transitory life come from no other source than the true Creator and Lord of their spirit. For, no one but a madman could imagine that angels or men can give mankind any gift that does not depend on His omnipotence.

In fact, in one of his discussions,[1] Plotinus the Platonist proves, from a consideration of the loveliness in the tiniest flower and leaf, that providence reaches from the invisible and unutterable beauty of the supreme God down to the lowliest objects on earth. His point is that not one of these

1 *Enneads* 3.2,13.

tiny and fleeting creations would be lovely with the perfect symmetry and rhythm of its form unless all had been modeled there where intelligible, immutable, and all-embracing Form eternally abides.

This is the truth which our Lord Jesus revealed in the words: 'See how the lilies of the field grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more you, O you of little faith!'[2] As things now are, the human soul is weighed down with earthly desires and longs for inferior, material goods which are necessary for this transitory life; yet these are despicable in comparison with the blessings of eternal life, and it is well, therefore, for the soul to accustom itself to hope for them from no one but God, so that divine adoration may not be diminished by earthly desires and a proper disdain and detachment may bring the soul nearer to God.

Chapter 15

It pleased Divine Providence so to order the course of history that, as I mentioned before and as is said in the Acts of the Apostles, the Law which prescribed the worship of one true God was proclaimed by the ministry of angels. At times, God Himself visibly appeared, not, of course, in His substance which remains invisible to human eyes, but in manifest miracles of created nature obeying its Creator. God also spoke in the audible, syllabled, successive words of human speech, although in His own nature He speaks not to the body but to the spirit, not to the senses but to the intelligence,

2 Matt. 6.28-30.

not in time but in eternity, with a Word, so to speak, that neither begins nor ever ends. His immortal and blessed ministers and messengers who enjoy His unchangeable truth hear Him clearly, not with the ears of the body but with those of the mind. And the orders they hear in some ineffable way they carry out without difficulty and without delay in the world of visible and sensible phenomena.

God's Law was promulgated gradually in step with historical development, so that at first, as I pointed out, its sanctions were rewards in this present life. These were meant as tokens of eternal blessings, even though few of those who celebrated the feast of thanksgiving had an intelligent understanding of their significance. What is true, however, is that every word and ceremony of this Law clearly testifies to the command prescribing the worship of one God—and not of one of many gods—but of Him who made heaven, earth, and every soul and spirit that is other than Himself He created; all other beings were created. And, both for their being and their well-being, they all need Him who made them.

Chapter 16

Which of the angels, therefore, should we trust in this matter of eternal beatitude? One group desires religious rites offered to themselves and demands ceremonies and sacrifices in their own honor. The others declare that all worship is due to God alone, the Creator of the universe, and teach us devoutly to adore Him in the vision of whom they are blessed as we, also, one day shall be blessed. This vision of God, remember, is so beautiful and so supremely lovable that, as Plotinus assures us, no matter how abounding in all other

blessings a man may be, if he lacks this vision, he will be utterly miserable.[1]

Thus, with miracles to back them, some angels invite us to worship this one God while others encourage us to pay homage to themselves, the former, however, forbidding us to worship the latter, while the latter dare not forbid us to worship God. The question is: Which of the two are we to believe? Let the Platonists try to answer, or any of the philosophers, or the theurgical experts or, rather, the periurgical quacks[2] —to give such practitioners the name they deserve. And, then, let all men reply who have kept alive a sense of their human dignity as rational creatures. Let them tell us whether sacrifice is due to such gods or angels as order us to worship themselves or to that One whom we are told to adore by angels who forbid us to worship themselves or any other creatures.

The crux of the matter is neither the marvels nor the miracles but the commands: Sacrifice to us; Do not sacrifice to us, but to God alone. The simplest religious instinct should be able to discern which of these commands is inspired by arrogant pride and which by true religion. I shall go further and say that if persuasive marvels were wrought only by those who demand homage for themselves while those who forbid such sacrifices merely taught that adoration is due to God alone, without a thought of working a single visible miracle, even then it should be evident, not indeed to the bodily senses but to the intellectual faculties, that the authority of the latter is to be preferred.

The fact is, however, that in order to confirm the truth of His divine promises God used the immortal messengers of His own majesty (and not of their pride) to produce even

1 *Enneads* 1.6,7.

2 . . . *theurgi vel potius periurgi; periergos* is Greek for busybody.

greater, surer, clearer miracles, lest angels who seek adoration for themselves might too easily seduce weak but pious souls into idolatry by the argument of visible marvels. Obviously, only a fool will follow a lie if the greater miracles are on the side of truth.

The fact is that not all the miracles which history ascribes to the gods of the heathens can be compared to the might and magnificence of those recorded in the Old Testament. I do not refer to those extraordinary accidents which occur from time to time and which result from the unknown powers of nature arranged and ordered by Divine Providence—such as the birth of abnormal animals and freakish phenomena of earth and air which are always terrifying and sometimes injurious and which crafty demons falsely claim can be produced and mitigated by magical rites. I refer, rather, to those prodigies which, apparently, are performed by their force and power. Thus, it is related that the statues of the household gods which Aeneas was taking with him when fleeing from Troy moved by themselves from place to place; that Tarquinius cut a grindstone with a razor; that the Epidaurian serpent kept as close as a companion to Aesculapius on his voyage to Rome; that a mere girl, to prove her purity, tied her girdle to a ship bearing the statue of the Phrygian mother and drew it after her in spite of the efforts of a host of men and oxen to make it immovable; that a vestal virgin whose virtue was in question settled the matter by carrying a sieve brimful of water from the Tiber without spilling a drop.

Still less can we compare to the divine miracles magical or theurgical tricks which even the polytheistic peoples have prohibited under penalty of their laws. For the most part, these so-called miracles are specious illusions which deceive the senses by playing on the imagination. For example, there is the trick of lowering the moon so that, as Lucan says, 'it

may be near enough to skim the plants on earth.'[3] And even where some of these manifestations seem as astonishing as the miracles of the saints, the purpose achieved reveals the incomparable superiority of the latter.

The marvels of magic are meant to persuade men to worship many gods, but they become the less deserving the more they demand it. The miracles commend the worship of the one God, and, as Scripture bears witness, the eventual abolition of pagan sacrifices proves He has no need of such things. It follows that those angels who command worship not for themselves but for God, the Creator, and who serve Him should be preferred to those other angels who demand sacrifice for themselves. For, the former prove their sincere love for us, by desiring, first, that our sacrifice be a homage not to themselves but to the God in whom they find their happiness, and, second, that we may seek and find Him from whom they have never strayed.

And even if there were any angels who, in desiring homage to be offered not to one but to many gods, want it not for themselves but for gods whose angels they are, we should still prefer the angels of the one God of gods, who not merely command that sacrifice be offered to Him but forbid that it be offered to any one else. Although none of the former angels forbids this worship of God, the latter command that it be given to Him alone.

One last thought. If such creatures, as their pride and deceit would indicate, are neither good angels nor angels of good gods but wicked demons, who want sacrifices offered to themselves and not to the single and supreme God, what greater protection against them can we choose than that of the one God served by good angels who order us to serve by sacrifice not themselves but Him to whom we should ourselves become a sacrifice?

3 *Pharsalia* 6.506.

Chapter 17

The Law of God, promulgated by means of angels[1] and ordaining the worship, by religious rites, of the one God of gods and prohibiting all other worship, was placed in an ark, called the ark of the testimony. As the name clearly indicates, while God, the object of all those ceremonies, could not be enclosed or circumscribed in space, nevertheless His responses and certain sensible signs could issue forth from the ark; and thus it was merely the testimonies of His will that were here manifested. It was by His will that the Law inscribed on stone tablets was, as I have said, placed within it, and, when the Israelites were wandering in the desert, the priests reverently carried both the ark and a tabernacle likewise called 'the tabernacle of the testimony'; and a sign was given—a cloud appeared by day and it shone as a fire by night;[2] and, whenever the cloud moved, the camp was shifted and, wherever it stood still, there the camp was pitched.[3]

Besides the signs just mentioned and the voices which could be heard in the neighborhood of the ark, other miraculous testimonies to the Law were witnessed. For example, when the people were entering the promised land, and the ark was crossing the Jordan, the river stood still above them and flowed on below them so that the ark and the people had a dry place for crossing.[4] Again, when they came upon the first hostile city where the religion was pagan and polytheistic, the ark was carried around it seven times and then, suddenly, the walls collapsed before a hand was raised or a battering-ram was used.[5] After the people of God had already settled

1 Acts 7.53.
2 Exod. 13.21; 40.36-38; Num. 9.15,16.
3 Num. 9.15-23.
4 Jos. 4.16,17.
5 Jos. 6.12-20.

in the land of promise and, as a punishment for their sins, had lost the ark to their enemies,[6] the victors placed it with honor in the temple of their favorite god, closed the door, and went away.[7] The following day, upon opening the door, they discovered that the idol to which they prayed had toppled to the ground and was broken into a mass of shapeless fragments.[8] Moved by the miracle and even more broken themselves by the punishment, they returned the ark of divine testimony to the people from whom they took it. And what a restoration it was! They placed the ark on a wagon and yoked to it cows whose calves they had taken away, and they allowed the animals to go in any direction, intending in this way to test God's power.[9] But the cows, without a man to lead or drive them and deaf to the lowing of their hungry calves, made straight for the camp of the Hebrews, and thus restored the great symbol of God's will to God's worshipers.

These and such like works are small in the sight of God, but they are a great lesson to men who need to be taught the fear of the Lord and the way of salvation. If it be true that philosophers, especially the Platonists, as I have said,[10] deservedly acquired renown for superior wisdom by reaching the conclusion that Divine Providence regulates even the smallest things on earth and by proving this from the evidence of the manifold beauties which are found not only in the bodies of animals but even in the plants and grasses of the fields, then, surely, there is a much more striking evidence of divinity in those events which happen at the hour predicted and which confirm that religion which forbids the offering of sacrifice to celestial, terrestrial, and infernal beings and

6 1 Sam. 4.11.
7 1 Sam. 5.2.
8 1 Sam. 5.4.
9 1 Sam. 6.9-12.
10 Cf. above, 10.14.

commands that it be given solely to the one God who can bring about Beatitude by His love for us and our love for Him. It is this God who, by determining the appointed time for those former sacrifices and by predicting that they would be changed into a better Sacrifice through the mediation of a better Priest, testified that He did not seek these sacrifices for themselves but for the greater realities which they symbolized. Thus does He show that He does not seek to add to His own exaltation by these honors but desires rather that we, for our good, be inspired to worship and cling to Him, and be inflamed with the fire of His love.

Chapter 18

A person, perhaps, may object that these miracles are false, that they are not a record of facts but a tissue of lies. Such a skeptic, if he imply that no written record can be relied on in such matters, is capable of saying that none of the gods takes any interest in human affairs. Now, it was only by effecting marvels that their gods persuaded the pagans to worship them, as their history testifies. (Of course, the feats of such gods could only prove that they had power, not that they could be of any help to man.) That is why in the present work, of which this is the tenth book, I have not undertaken to refute those who deny all divine power or who say that, if there be any divinity, it has no concern for human affairs; but only those who prefer their own gods to our God, the Founder of His holy and most glorious City, because they do not know that He is the invisible and immutable Founder of the visible and mutable world and, in very truth, the Dispenser of that beatitude which can be found in nothing He created but only in Himself.

For it was with great truth that one of His Prophets says: 'But it is good for me to adhere to my God.'[1] Now, philosophers discuss the problem of that final good to attain which all our duties should be directed. The psalmist did not say: 'It is good for me to have an abundance of riches, or to be decked out in purple with an imperial sceptre and a crown'; nor (as some philosophers have not blushed to say): 'My good is the pleasure of the senses'; nor (what is wiser and what the better philosophers seem to have taught): 'My good is the virtue of my soul.' What the psalmist said was: 'It is good for me to adhere to my God.' He received this teaching from Him who is alone worthy of receiving sacrifice, as His holy angels have testified by miracles. No wonder that he himself became God's sacrifice, casting himself into His spiritual fire and burning with a holy desire for His ineffable and mystical embrace.[2]

One other point. If the worshipers of many gods—whatever kind of gods they think they are—believe that the miracles recorded by historians and writers on magic (or, as they prefer to say, theurgy) were performed by their gods, they have no right to doubt the reality of the miracles described in writings whose greater credibility is assured by the fact that they teach us to sacrifice to Him alone who is greater than all other gods.

Chapter 19

There are some who think that, though these visible sacrifices may be suitable for other gods, for the God who is invisible, greater and better, only invisible, greater and better

1 Ps. 72.28.
2 . . . *ineffabilem incorporeumque conplexum.*

sacrifices, such as the offering of a pure mind and upright will, are appropriate. Such people are evidently ignorant of the fact that these visible sacrifices are mere symbols of invisible sacrifice just as truly as audible words are mere signs of realities. For example, when we direct our prayers and praise to Him, we use words which have meaning and, at the same time, we offer in our hearts the things that our words signify. So, too, when we offer sacrifice, we know that visible sacrifice should be offered to no one but Him to whom we ourselves, in our hearts, should be the invisible sacrifice. It is when we are offering such sacrifice that all the angels and the higher powers who, outstanding especially in goodness and piety, look with favor upon us, rejoice with us, and aid us with all their strength to make this sacrifice. Even if we should wish to offer this homage to them, they are unwilling to receive it. And when, under a visible form, they are sent to men, they openly forbid it, as the examples in Scripture show. When some people thought that the honor of adoration or sacrifice which is due to God should be given to the angels, too, these spirits admonished them and forbade it, ordering that this homage be conferred on Him to whom alone they knew that is was rightly due.[1]

Even saintly men of God have imitated the holy angels. In Lycaonia, Paul and Barnabas, having worked a miraculous cure, were taken for gods and the Lycaonians wished to sacrifice victims to them. But the humble and virtuous Apostles remonstrated, announcing to them that God in whom they should believe.[2]

The deceitful spirits, on the other hand, in their pride exact this worship for themselves precisely because they know that it is due to God. For, contrary to what Porphyry says

1 Judges 13.15,16; Apoc. 8,9.
2 Acts 14.8-18.

and some fancy, it is not the odors of dead victims that these spirits love but divine honors. For, certainly, of such odors they have a great supply everywhere and, if they wish more, they are able to provide them for themselves.

The spirits, then, who claim divinity for themselves take pleasure not in the fumes of bodies but in the soul of any suppliant whom they dominate, once they have deceived and seduced him; and they bar from him the way to the true God, so that, while rendering homage to some being other than God, he is unable to offer himself in sacrifice to Him.

Chapter 20

Christ Jesus, Himself man, is the true Mediator, for, inasmuch as He took the 'form of a slave,'[1] He became the Mediator between God and men.'[2] In His character as God, He receives sacrifices in union with the Father, with whom He is one God; yet He chose, in His character as a slave, to be Himself the Sacrifice rather than to receive it, lest any one might take occasion to think that sacrifice could be rendered to a creature. Thus it is that He is both the Priest who offers and the Oblation that is offered.[3] And it was His will that as a sacrament of this reality there should be the daily sacrifice of the Church, which, being the Body of Him, her Head, learns to offer itself through Him. This is the true sacrifice of which the ancient sacrifices of the saints were but many and manifold symbols. This one sacrifice was prefigured, in a variety of ways, as though one idea were being expressed in many words to drive in the truth without boring the reader.

1 Phil. 2.7.
2 1 Tim. 2.5.
3 *Per hoc et sacerdos est, ipse offerens, ipse et oblatio.*

It is the supreme and true sacrifice to which all false sacrifices have given place.

Chapter 21

For short periods and at prescribed times, power has been given to the demons to incite men whom they control to exercise a tyrannical hostility to the City of God. Thus, they are able not only to receive sacrifice from those who offer it and to seek it from those who are well disposed but also to extort it violently from the unwilling by means of persecutions. However, this power is not a menace to the Church but rather an advantage, since is helps to fill up the number of its martyrs.[1] And these the City of God esteems as its most illustrious and honored citizens, just because they have resisted the impious so valiantly, even 'unto blood, striving against sin.'[2]

In more classical diction, we might call these men our heroes, if the word were compatible with the custom of the Church. The word 'hero' is said to be derived from Juno, whose name in Greek is Hera, and, according to Greek mythology, one of whose sons was called Heros; the point of the myth being, when interpreted allegorically, that Juno reigned over the air where, according to the Greeks, heroes dwell in company with the demons. Heroes, for them, were the souls of the deserving dead.

For an altogether different reason, however, our martyrs might be called heroes, if, as I said, Church use would allow the word. Our reason would be, not that they are associated with the aerial demons, but because they have defeated these

1 Cf. Apoc. 6.11.
2 Cf. Heb. 12.4.

demons, these powers of the air, and, among them, Juno herself. For, whatever her name means, the poets, with good reason have continually represented Juno as hostile to virtue and envious of courageous men who make an effort to get to heaven. Although, I regret to say, in this matter, Virgil falters and fails, for, after having her say, 'I am conquered by Aeneas,'[3] he has Aeneas receive from Helenus the following advice, as though it were a religious counsel:

> 'Sing vows to Juno, and the goddess fair
> Conquer by your gifts and prayer.'[4]

Arguing from this advice (not, however, as though it expressed his own opinion but merely that of others), Porphyry says that a good god or genius cannot approach a man unless, first, an evil spirit has been appeased. This is equivalent to saying that the malicious deities are more powerful than the good ones, since the former impede the latter from assisting us unless, having been placated, they consent to give place to them. And, in case of persistent opposition from the bad spirits, the good are not able to prevail, while, on their part, the wicked ones can injure while the good are impotent to resist them.

Now, this is not the way of the true and truly holy religion. Not thus do our martyrs triumph over Juno, that is, the powers of the air who are jealous of the virtues of the saints. No! Our heroes, if we may so call them, defeat Hera by virtue and divine grace, not by gifts and prayer. Scipio has been more justly surnamed Africanus for having vanquished Africa by his valor rather than for having pacified his foes with presents in order to obtain their mercy.

3 Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.310.
4 *Ibid.* 3.438-439.

Chapter 22

It is by true piety that men of God cast out the powers of the air, the enemies and adversaries of virtue, and this they do by exorcizing, not by propitiating them. They triumph over all the temptations of the enemy, not by praying to him but to God against him. The fact is that the evil spirit can conquer or subjugate no one who is not leagued with him in sin. Thus, the adversary is overcome in His name who assumed our humanity, so that, as Priest and Sacrifice, being without sin, He might effect the remission of our sins in Himself, that is to say, through the 'Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus'[1] by whom we are cleansed from sin and reconciled to God.

For, it is our sins which separate us from God, and in this life these are cleansed not by our own virtue but by divine compassion, not through our own power but through His indulgence; for even the virtue, little as it is, which we call our own is but a concession of His goodness. We would attribute too much to ourselves in this human flesh did we not, even to the moment of laying it aside, live under the favor of pardon.

The reason, then, why grace was bestowed upon us through our Mediator is that we who were polluted by sinful flesh might be purified by the 'likeness of sinful flesh.'[2] It is by the grace of God, the token of His great compassion for us, that we are guided in this life by faith and, after this life, will be led by the vision of immutable truth to the plenitude of all perfection.

1 1 Tim. 2.5.
2 Rom. 8.3.

Chapter 23

Even Porphyry admits that is was announced by oracles of the gods that sacrifices to the sun or moon do not purify us, his point being that no man can be purified by sacrifices to any of the gods. For, which of the gods could purify when appeased, if sacrifices to the sun and moon—the most highly esteemed of all the celestial gods—are of no avail? The same oracle, according to Porphyry, revealed that the source of purification is the 'Principles,' the point here being that no one who learns that sacrifices to the sun or moon do not purify should conclude that sacrifices to some other of the many gods might be efficacious.

Now we know what he means, as a Platonist, by 'Principles.' He means God the Father and God the Son, the Son being called the Intellect or Mind of the Father. As to the Holy Spirit he says nothing or, at least, nothing that is clear, He does mention a third holding a middle place between these two, but I do not understand what he means. If, indeed, like Plotinus, in the passage dealing with the three 'principal substances,'[1] he wishes to identify this third term with the nature of the soul, surely he would not have said that it held a middle place between the first two, that is, between the Father and the Son. For Plotinus certainly considers the nature of the soul to be inferior to the intellect of the Father,[2] while Porphyry, mentioning this middle term, does not regard it as situated below but between the Father and Son.[3]

No doubt this was the best way he was able or willing to indicate what we call the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit, neither of the Father alone nor of the Son, but of both. For

1 *Enneads* 5.1.
2 *Ibid.* 5.6.
3 . . . *non postponit, sed interponit.*

philosophers use words loosely and, even in matters which are very difficult to understand, they are reckless of offending religious ears. We Christians, however, feel obliged to speak according to a definite norm and to avoid that licence of words which so engenders an irreligious attitude toward the realities which words are meant to signify.

Chapter 24

When, therefore, we speak of God, we do not speak of two or three principles any more than we think it right to talk about two or three gods. However, in speaking of each Person, whether it be the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, we confess that each one is God. Nevertheless, we do not say, with the Sabellian heretics, that the Father is the same as the Son and that the Holy Spirit is the same as the Father and Son. But for us, the Father is the Father of the Son, the Son is the Son of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son without being either the Father or the Son. It was correct, therefore, to say that only by some principle is man purified. The mistake of the Platonists is to have spoken of Principles in the plural.

As for Porphyry, victim as he was of jealous powers whom he was both ashamed to acknowledge and afraid freely to refute, he was unwilling to recognize that Christ, our Lord, is the Principle by whose Incarnation we are purified. He despised Him for the very flesh which He assumed in order to offer the sacrifice by which we are purified, for this great mystery is not intelligible to that pride which the true and gracious Mediator abased by His humility. Christ showed Himself to mortals in that mortality which the malignant and deceitful mediators lacked and, therefore, prided them-

selves on their immortality while they promised their deceptive aid to unhappy men who were merely mortal.

Now, the good and true Mediator has taught us that evil consists in sin, not in the substance or nature of that flesh which He was able to assume together with the human soul and retain without sin, and lay down in death and change into a better substance in the resurrection. He has shown, also, that death itself—although it is a punishment for sin and one which, nevertheless, He suffered without sin for our salvation—is not to be avoided at the price of sin, but rather, if occasion offers, is to be endured for the sake of what is right. For He was able to expiate sin by dying because He died without sin.

Our Platonist, however, has not acknowledged Him as the Principle; otherwise, he would recognize Him as the Purifier, For, certainly, the Principle is neither the flesh nor the human soul in Christ; it is the Word by which all things were made. Hence, the flesh does not purify by itself but through the Word by which it was assumed when 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'[1] Once, when He was speaking about the mystery of eating His flesh—and those who did not understand and were shocked went away saying: 'This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?'—He said to those who remained: 'It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing.'[2]

The Principle, therefore, having assumed a soul and flesh, purifies the soul and flesh of believers. That is why, when the Jews asked Him who He was, He replied that He was the Principle.[3] Without doubt, carnal as we are, weak, susceptible to sin, enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, we

1 John 1.14.
2 John 6.60-64.
3 John 8.25.

would be unable to comprehend this word if He had not cleansed and healed us by means of something that we were and something that we were not. For, we were men but we were not holy. However, in His Incarnation the nature He assumed was human, but it was holy, not sinful. Such is the mediation by which a hand has been stretched forth to men fallen and lying on the earth. Such is the seed prepared for by angels by whose proclamations we received the law which prescribes the worship of one God and promises the coming of this Mediator.[4]

Chapter 25

It is by faith in this mystery and by holiness of life that purification was possible for the just in former times. This includes both those who lived before the Law was given to the Hebrews—for God or His angels never failed to teach them—and even those who lived in the time of the Law. For these latter, spiritual realities were prefigured in promises which seem to be temporal. Hence, we speak of the Old Testament. However, there were, at that time, prophets who, like the angels, announced the spiritual promise, and among them the one whose great and divine declaration concerning the final good of man I mentioned above:[1] 'But it is good for me to adhere to my God.'[2]

This psalm makes a clear distinction between the two Testaments, the Old and the New. It was, in fact, because the Psalmist saw that these material and earthly promises were

4 Cf. Gal. 3.19.

1 Cf. above, 10.18.
2 Ps. 72.28.

shared by the impious that he said: 'But my feet were almost moved; my steps had wellnigh slipped.'[3] He believed that it was in vain that he himself had served God when he observed the enemies of God flaunting that very prosperity which he was awaiting. Desiring to understand why it was so, he kept trying to solve the mystery until, at last, entering the sanctuary of God, he realized the fate of those whom he had falsely considered happy.

He understood then that in their elevation they were cast down, defeated and destroyed because of their iniquities, and that their accumulation of worldly fortune had become for them as the dream of one who awakes and suddenly finds himself deprived of all the imaginary joys of which he had dreamed. And, as here below in the earthly city they were full of high opinions about themselves, he says: 'O Lord, so in thy city thou shalt bring their image to nothing.'[4]

He shows clearly, however, that it was advantageous for him to seek these earthly goods only from the one true God who holds all things in His power. Thus he says: 'I am become as a beast before thee; and I am always with thee.' 'As a beast,' that is, without understanding; for he seems to mean: 'I ought to have desired to receive from Thee those things which the wicked and I cannot have in common. When I saw them abounding in material riches, I thought that I had served you in vain, since these goods were enjoyed by those who were unwilling to serve you. However, I am always with Thee, for even when I desired such things I did not seek after other gods.' And so, he continues: ' Thou hast held me by my right hand: and by Thy will Thou hast conducted me and with Thy glory Thou hast received me'; as if he

3 Ps. 72.2.
4 Ps. 72.20.

meant that all those goods whose abundance in the hands of the wicked had almost caused him to fall were reckoned inauspicious.[5]

'What have I in heaven?' he asks, 'and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?' He blames himself and is rightly displeased with himself because possessing, as he did, so great a good in heaven—as he later understood—he should yet ask of God for something fleeting here on earth, nothing better than a fragile felicity made of clay. He says: 'My heart and my flesh have failed, O God of my heart'—meaning, of course, a successful failure, rising from things below to those above, as he says in another psalm: 'My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord';[6] and again: 'My soul hath fainted after thy salvation.'[7]

However, although he had spoken both of the failure of his heart and of his flesh, he did not add: 'God of my heart and of my flesh,' but only: 'God of my heart.' For it is the heart that purifies the flesh. Hence, our Lord says: 'Clean first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside too may be clean.'[8] Then the Psalmist adds that his portion is God Himself—not some gift, but God Himself: 'The God of my heart and the God that is my portion forever,' because, among all the goods which man may choose, it is God Himself whom he decided to choose: 'For behold they that go far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that are disloyal to thee'—that is to say, all those who prostitute themselves to many gods.

Finally, there follows the verse for which the rest of the psalm seems to be a preparation: 'But it is good for me to

5 . . . *tamquam ad sinistram cuncta illa pertineant* . . .
6 Ps. 83.2.
7 Ps. 118.81.
8 Matt. 23.26.

adhere to my God'—not to separate myself from Him, not to be worshiping promiscuously. But this adherence to God will only be perfect when all in us that is to be redeemed shall have been redeemed. For the moment, however, we must 'put our hope in God.' For the Apostle says that 'hope that is seen is not hope. For how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.'[9]

Established now in this hope, let us follow the further counsel of the Psalmist and let us be, in our own measure, angels of God, that is to say, His messengers, announcing His will and praising His glory and grace. For, when he had said: 'To put my hope in God,' he added: 'that I may declare all thy praises, in the gates of the daughter of Sion.' This is the most glorious City of God; this the City which knows and worships one God; the holy angels have announced this City and have invited us to their society, desiring us to be fellow citizens with them. They do not wish that we should honor them as our gods, but that we should, with them, worship Him who is their God and our God; nor that we should offer sacrifices to them but that we should, with them, become a sacrifice to Him.

Anyone, therefore, who will free himself from malignant obstinacy and think these things over will be assured that all these happy and immortal spirits are so far from envying us —for, if they did, the would not be happy—that they love us and wish us to share their happiness, and that they favor us and aid us more when, with them, we worship one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, than if we were to offer sacrifice to them.

9 Rom. 8.24,25.

Chapter 26

I do not know but, somehow, it seems to me that Porphyry felt a little ashamed of his friends, the theurgists. For, he had glimpses of much that I have been saying, yet he never came out frankly against polytheism in defense of this faith. In fact, he declared that there are two kinds of angels: those who come down to earth to announce divine truths to theurgists; and others who reveal on earth such truths as the will and majesty and mystery of the Father. But how in the world, then, can we believe that those angels whose ministry it is to declare the will of the Father should desire us to be subject to any one but Him whose will they announce to us? No wonder that even our Platonist himself rightly counsels us to imitate rather than invoke them.

We need have no fear, then, that these immortal and happy spirits, who are submissive to the one God, will be offended if we do not sacrifice to them. For they know that this sacrifice is due to the one true God in union with whom their happiness consists and, therefore, without doubt, they are unwilling that sacrifice, whether symbolical or real, should be given to themselves. Only the proud and wretched demons have such arrogance, and from them nothing is so remote as the holiness of those who are submissive to God and who find their happiness only in union with Him. And if we, too, are to enjoy this happiness, they must aid us with sincere kindness without demanding our submission in return and must proclaim His authority under whom we are associated with them in peace.

Why, then, are you still afraid, you a philosopher, to speak frankly against these powers that are jealous of true virtues and of the gifts of the true God. You have taken a first step by distinguishing between angels who announce the will of

the Father and those angels who can be induced by I know not what magic to come down to the theurgists. Why do you still honor them by admitting that they proclaim divine truths? What divine revelation can they announce when they do not proclaim the will of the Father? Obviously, these are those very spirits whom the envious man obliged, by his incantations, to abstain from purifying a soul, so that, according to your own story, not even the prayers of the good man seeking purification were able to loosen their chains and restore them to the mastery of themselves.[1]

Are you really in doubt whether these are wicked demons? Or are you playing the agnostic to avoid offence to the theurgists who exploited your curiosity, and taught you their cruel and crazy tricks as though they could be of some great benefits to you? We are dealing not with an envious power but with a plague, not with a mistress but a slave of the envious, as you yourself admit. How, then, do you dare to raise them above the air into the very heavens and to place them among your gods of the stars—or, rather, to insult the very stars by these abominations?

Chapter 27

How much more human and tolerable was the error of Apuleius, your fellow Platonist! For he attributed only to the sublunar demons the storms of sickly passions and worried minds, and he made this confession unwillingly, for he held them in honor. But, when he discussed the higher gods of heaven who dwell in ethereal spaces, whether visible and shining like the sun, and moon, and stars, or other invisible

1 Cf. above, Ch. 9.

gods in whose existence he believed, he argued at great length to prove them free from the least flutter of these passions.

It is not from Plato but from your Chaldaean teachers that you have learned to lift up human weakness to the ethereal and empyrean regions of the world and even to the celestial firmament, so that your gods might communicate divine revelations to your theurgists. It is true that by your intellectual life you have risen above such revelations and that, as a philosopher, you feel no need of the purifications of theurgic art. Nevertheless, you recommend them to others—in lieu, I suppose, of paying fees to those who taught you—and you persuade those who cannot be philosophers to take up tricks for which you have no use, because, of course, you are above such things.

And so, all who are inept at philosophy—a habit exceedingly difficult except for the very few—should, on your authority, seek out the theurgical experts in order tc be purified—if not in their minds, at least, in their souls. And since those who are unfit for philosophy make up a very great majority, most people should be told to consult your surreptitious and illegal teachers rather than to attend the Platonic schools. For, this is what those impure demons who pretend to be ethereal gods and have made you their herald and messenger have promised you, namely, that those who have been purified in soul by theurgic art do not indeed return to the Father, but that they will dwell above the aerial regions among the ethereal gods.

But, that great multitude of men whom Christ came to free from the domination of the demons pays no attention to such absurdities. In Him they have found the most merciful of purifications for their mind, their spirit and their body. For, His reason in assuming the whole of human nature without sin was to heal the whole man from the plague of sin.

I could wish that you yourself had known Him and had confidently committed yourself to Him to be healed rather than to your own human virtue, which is so fragile and infirm, or to your pernicious curiosity. He would not have deceived you, for your own oracles, as you admit, have recognized Him as holy and immortal. And of Him the most illustrious of poets has sung, of course, poetically in the sense that He is symbolized by another person, and yet truly, if the passage is referred to Christ:

> 'Each trace of crime, when thou as leader shalt appear,
> Shall be removed and earth released from endless fear.'[1]

Here the poet speaks not of sins, but of that which, by reason of our infirmity in this life, clings to the virtue even of those who are most advanced in justice—namely, the vestiges of sin; and these can be removed only by that Saviour to whom this verse has reference. For, of course, Virgil does not claim sole responsibility for this prophecy, as he makes clear in the fourth verse of the eclogue which runs: 'The last age predicted by the Cumaean sibyl has now arrived.' This clearly implies that the prediction had been made by the Cumaean sibyl.

On the other hand, what the theurgists or, rather, the demons who assume the appearance and forms of gods do is not to purify the human spirit but rather to pollute it by faked apparitions which are merely tricky illusions of unsubstantial forms. How can demons purify the spirit of man when their own spirits are impure? Else, how could they be bound by the incantations of the envious man and so inhibited by fear or envy as to refuse the favor, vain as it was, which they seemed on the point of bestowing. It suffices for us to hear

1 Virgil, *Eclog.* 4.13,14.

you confess that theurgic purification cannot cleanse the intellectual soul, that is, our mind, and that even the spiritual soul—the part inferior to the mind—which you claim can be purged by theurgic art cannot by this means become immortal and eternal.

Now, Christ promises eternal life. That is why, to your indignation—and not less to your astonishment and bewilderment—the world runs to Him. You cannot deny that theurgicism leads very many men astray by its blind and foolish ideas, and that the most certain error of all is to have recourse to principalities and angels by offering sacrifices and prayers? Why in the world, then, do you fall back on the pretext that the labor of learning this art must not be lost when you direct men to theurgists in the hope that those, at least, who do not live by reason may be purged in the merely spiritual part of the soul?

Chapter 28

Thus you commit men to inescapable error and are unashamed of your wickedness, you who profess love for virtue and wisdom. If only you had really and truly loved wisdom, you would have come to know 'Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.'[1] Instead, you became inflated with pride in your shallow learning and shrank from His salutary humility. You do confess, however, that the spiritual soul, even without recourse to those theurgic arts and mysteries which you so laboriously learned in vain, can be purified by the virtue of continency.

Sometimes you go so far as to admit that these mysteries do not elevate the soul after death, which is to say that, after

1 1 Cor. 1.24.

this life, they are of no avail even to that part of the soul which you call spiritual. In one way or another you keep on referring to these arts, but as far as I can make out you have no better purpose than to show what an adept you are and to satisfy, or at least to excite, curiosity in regard to illicit arts. Happily, you admit that magic is dangerous both because of the laws against it and because of the risks involved in its practice. I only wish that your unfortunate readers would heed, at least, this one lesson and so learn to step back before they are engulfed in this art, or else not to come near it at all.[2]

You say, indeed, that ignorance and the many vices resulting from it cannot be purified by these mysteries but only by the *patrikòs noûs,* that is to say, the understanding or intellect of the Father which knows the Father's will. But you do not believe that this is what Christ is. You despise Him because His body was taken from a woman and because of the opprobrium of the Cross, imagining, I suppose, that you can disdain and reject such lowly facts because you are the sort of person who is fit to pluck lofty wisdom from the sky. Remember, however, that He fulfills the true predictions of the holy Prophets concerning Him: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.'[3] And, of course, what He destroys and condemns in them is not His own wisdom which He has given them but what those who have none from Him arrogate to themselves.

That is why, when the Apostle quoted this Prophet's testimony, he went on to say: 'Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputant of this world? Has not God turned to foolishness the wisdom of this world? For since, in God's wisdom, the world did not come to know God by wisdom, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching,

2 . . . *abscedant aut eo penitus non accedant.*
3 Isa. 29.14; 1 Cor. 1.19.

to save those who believe. For the Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks look for wisdom; but we, for our part, preach a crucified Christ—to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.'[4]

This is what those who trust in their own wisdom and strength despise as foolish and weak. But this is the mystery of grace—to heal the weak who do not falsely boast of a happiness not their own, but, rather, humbly and truly confess their misery.

Chapter 29

You speak expressly of the Father and of His Son whom you call the intellect or understanding of the Father. You speak, also, of one who is between these two and by whom, we suppose, you mean the Holy Spirit. According to your way of speaking, you call these three Gods. On this point, in spite of inaccurate terminology, you catch at least a glimpse, through the mist of your imaginings, of the end toward which we must strive. Yet you refuse to acknowledge the Incarnation of the immutable Son of God by which we are saved and enabled to reach those realities in which we believe and which, in part, we understand. Thus, you see, however dimly and at a great distance, the country where you should dwell, but you will not take the road that leads there.

You confess, in the same way, the reality of grace when you say that it is granted to a few to reach God by virtue of their intelligence. You do not say: 'It has pleased a few' or

4 1 Cor. 1.20-25.

'Few have wished.' You say: 'It has been granted.' Surely, you are admitting the grace of God and the insufficiency of man. You even use this very word in a passage where, following Plato, you say you are sure that, in this life, no man can arrive at the perfection of wisdom, but that those who live according to their conscience[1] can make up, by the providence and grace of God, in the life to come, for all that was lacking on earth. Now, if only you could have known 'the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord,'[2] and the Incarnation by which He assumed a human soul and body, you would have seen that there is no greater example of grace than this.

But, why this apostrophe? I know that, so far as you are concerned, now that you are dead, it is a waste of words. But, as for those who esteem you and love you either out of love for wisdom or out of curiosity about those arts which you should never have learned, it is these I am addressing, in your name and, perhaps, not in vain. The grace of God could not, in any other way, have been so gracious[3] as when, in the Incarnation, the only Son of God, remaining unchangeable in Himself, clothed Himself with our humanity and gave the promise of His love to men, by the mediation of a man—gave men hope that they might come to Him who, before, had been as distant as the immortal is from the mortal, the unchangeable from the changeable, the holy from the unholy, the happy from the unhappy. And, because He had endowed our nature with the desire both of happiness and of immortality, He joined His happiness with our mortality and, by suffering, He taught us to despise what we fear so that He might give us what we desire.

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1 . . . *secundum intellectum* . . .
2 Rom. 7.25.
3 *Gratia Dei non potuit gratius commendari* . . .

But, to acquiesce in this truth you needed humility, and that is a virtue to which your stiff neck does not easily bend. For, what is so incredible in this teaching, especially for you whose philosophy should predispose you to this belief? What is incredible in the doctrine that God assumed a human soul and body? After all, you have a high enough idea of the intellectual soul and, therefore, of the human soul to believe it capable of consubstantiality with the intelligence of the Father which, you admit, is the Son of God.

What, then, is so incredible in the fact that one intellectual soul has been assumed in an ineffable and unique manner for the salvation of many? Now, that a body must be united to the soul, if a man is to be whole and complete, we know from the experience of our own nature. Yet, if this were not the most common experience in the world, it would be very hard indeed to believe, for it is much easier to believe in a union of spirit with spirit, or, to use your terminology, of the incorporeal with the incorporeal, even though the union were between a human and a divine or a mutable and an immutable spirit, than to believe in a union between body and soul.

But do you, perhaps, find a difficulty in the extraordinary birth of this body from a virgin? Surely, it ought not to be a difficulty but rather an inducement to embrace our religion that a miraculous being should be born in a miraculous manner. Or, perhaps, you cannot believe that this body, which was laid aside in death and transformed in its resurrection, ascended incorruptible and immortal into heaven merely because Porphyry, in his 'The Return of the Soul,' which I have cited so often, has insisted that the soul must escape from every kind of a body if it is to be forever happy with God?

But, surely, you ought to have corrected him and his doctrines, since you share his incredible opinions about the soul

of this visible world which is an immense material body. For, as Platonists, you say that the universe is not merely alive but very happy, and you even hope that it will live forever. How, then, can the soul of the world be never detached from its body nor ever cease to be happy, if it is true that, for the soul to be happy, it must flee from every kind of a body? You also admit in your writings that the sun and all the other stars are bodies—as everyone else can see and unhesitatingly admits. But, with what you think is even more profound insight, you add that these livings beings are utterly happy and, in union with their bodies, are eternal.

Yet, the moment the Christian faith is in question, you forget or pretend to be ignorant of the doctrines that you are accustomed to discuss or teach. Why is this so, and why do you repudiate Christianity for the very opinions which you yourself repudiate? The answer is: Because Christ came in humility and you are proud.

It may be true that the question of what kind of bodies the saints will have in the resurrection is sometimes discussed in needless detail by experts in the Christian Scriptures; nevertheless, we are all convinced that they will be everlasting and of the kind which Christ revealed in His resurrection. But, whatever they are like, incorruptible and immortal bodies can offer no impediment to the contemplation by which the soul is in union with God, and, in any case, you yourself place in the celestial regions the immortal bodies of beings whose happiness is immortal. Why, then, do you stick to the opinion that our happiness depends on escaping from every kind of a body and pretend that this is your reason for rejecting Christianity? The explanation is, I repeat: Christ is humble, you are proud.

Perhaps you are ashamed to be corrected? But this is precisely the vice of the proud. It is, I suppose, humiliating for

learned men to leave the school of Plato to enter that of Christ who inspired a fisherman with wisdom enough to say: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was made nothing that has been made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness grasped it not.'[4]

This is that beginning of the holy Gospel 'According to John' which, according to a Platonist philosopher, as I often heard from the holy old man Simplicianus, afterwards bishop of the Church at Milan,[5] ought to be written in letters of gold and posted high in a prominent place in all the churches. But the reason why the proud despise this divine Teacher is because 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'[6] For such unfortunates it is not enough to be sick; they must take pride in their sickness and think it below their dignity to take the medicine which could cure them. The result is that, instead of being cured, they suffer a serious relapse.

Chapter 30

If it is improper to improve upon anything that Plato has said, why has Porphyry himself rectified quite a few of the important doctrines? There is no doubt that Plato wrote that, after death, the souls of men return into the bodies of beasts. This opinion was also held by Plotinus, the teacher of Porphyry; however, Porphyry rightly rejected it. According to him, human souls return into human bodies; not the

4 John 1.1-6.
5 397-400 A. D.
6 John 1.14.

ones they have left behind, but into new bodies. He was ashamed, apparently, to believe like Plato for fear that a mother, becoming a mule, might have to carry her own son on her back, yet he did not blush to believe that a mother who became a girl might marry her own son.

It is surely more respectable to believe what the true and holy angels have taught us, what the Prophets inspired by the Spirit of God, what He Himself whom His messengers announced as the Saviour to come, what the Apostles who were sent forth to spread the Gospel through the whole world have told us, namely, that souls return once and for all into their own bodies, not that they go on returning into one body after another.

However, as I said, Porphyry changed his mind in this matter, inasmuch as he maintained that human souls could pass into human bodies only, and he unhesitatingly rejected the Platonic idea of bestial prisons for human souls. He said, also, that God put the human soul into the world in order that, realizing the evil nature of matter, it might return to the Father, never again to be detained or stained by contract with material things. In spite of his metaphysical mistake—for a soul is given to a body that is may do good; and it cannot realize the nature of evil unless it does evil—on this important point, Porphyry rectifies the theory of other Platonists inasmuch as he admits that the soul, once cleansed from every evil and in communion with the Father, will never again be subject to the evils of this world. He thus definitely destroys the principal teaching of the Platonists—that there is a continual cycle of living men dying and of dead men living again.[1] And he has shown that Virgil was wrong when he sang—inspired, apparently, by Plato—that purified souls in the Elysian fields—a poetic symbol for the joys of the blessed—are sum-

1 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo,* pp. 70,71.

moned to the river Lethe—meaning that they forget their own past:

> 'To see the earth and, heedless of what went before,
> Desire, in fleshy form, to live their lives once more.'[2]

Porphyry was right in rejecting this doctrine. It is certainly foolish to believe that, from a life which is perfectly happy precisely because its eternity is secure, souls would desire to return to this life and the frailty of corruptible bodies—as though the perfection of purification was a longing for defilement. For, if perfect purification brings on the forgetfulness of all evils and forgetfulness of evils produces a desire for the body so that souls may again be entangled in evils, then it follows that unhappiness is to be the fruit of supreme happiness, foolishness that of perfect wisdom, and defilement that of complete purification.

Nor can truth be the root of the soul's happiness, however long the happiness may last, if the soul must be deceived in order to be happy. For, there can be no happiness without security, but, in order to be secure, the soul must believe that it will always be happy—a mistake, since eventually it will be unhappy. Now, how can the soul rejoice in truth when its joy is based on falsehood? Porphyry understood this. His reason for saying that the purified soul returns to the Father was that it can never again be polluted by contact with evil. The conclusion is that those Platonists are wrong who maintain that there is a necessary rotation by which souls must return to the evils from which they have been removed.

But, even if this were true, what advantage would it be to know it, except, perhaps, that the Platonists might be able to feel superior to us because we are ignorant in this life of

2 Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.750.

what they themselves are destined to be ignorant of when pure and wise in another and better life and of which they must be ignorant in order to be happy? But, if this is absurd and foolish, then, evidently, the opinion of Porphyry is to be preferred to that of other philosophers who theorize about souls in a continual cycle of happiness and misery. But, if this be so, we have here a Platonist who gave up Plato for something better, who saw what Plato failed to see, one who was not afraid to correct such an illustrious man and to prefer truth to his own master.

Chapter 31

Surely, in matters which the mind of man cannot penetrate it is better simply to believe what God tells us, namely, that the soul is not co-eternal with God but was created out of nothing. To justify their refusal to believe this, the Platonists have been content with the argument that nothing can be everlasting unless it has existed eternally. What, however, Plato himself expressly stated[1] is that the world and those gods whom God put in the world began to be and had a beginning, although they will have no end, since the will of the all-powerful Creator will keep them in existence forever.

However, the Platonists have invented a way of interpreting this, saying that beginning means causal subordination, not an order in time. They say: 'If from all eternity a foot were standing in dust, there would always be a footprint beneath it. No one would doubt that this footprint was caused by the pressure of the foot, but no one would think that the impression came after the foot even though it was caused by the foot. In the same way, the world and the gods created

1 *Timaeus*, p. 41.

in it have always existed, just as their Maker has always existed; yet they were made.'

Let us suppose that the soul has always existed. Must we say, therefore, that its misery, also, has always existed? If not, then there is something in the soul which was not there from all eternity, but began its existence in time. If this be so, why is it not possible for the soul itself to have begun its existence in time and not to have existed eternally? Or, take the happiness of the soul. After the experience of evil, it will be secure for all eternity. As Porphyry himself confesses, happiness undoubtedly begins in time, although it is to continue forever, in spite of having had no previous existence.

Thus, that whole argument falls to the ground which supposes that nothing can be without an end in time unless it was without a beginning in time. It was enough to show that the happiness of the soul, which had a beginning in time, will have no end in time.

Human weakness, therefore, should yield to divine authority. In regard to true religion, let us believe those holy and immortal angels who do not claim for themselves honors which they know are due to their God, who is also ours, and who command us to offer sacrifice only to Him whose sacrifice, as I have said before[2] and must often repeat, we and they together ought to be. I mean the sacrifice offered by Him as Priest who, in the humanity which He assumed and according to which He wished to be our Priest, deigned to become a sacrifice for us even unto death.

2 E.g., 10.16, above.

Chapter 32

This religion constitutes the single way for the liberation of all souls, for souls can be saved by no way but this. This is, if I may so speak, the King's highway which alone leads to a kingdom, not tottering on some temporal height, but secure on the firm foundations of eternity. Porphyry, however, says, toward the end of the first book of his 'Return of the Soul,' that he has not yet come across the claim, made by any school of thought, to embrace a universal way for the liberation of the soul—certainly, not one taken from any genuine philosophy, or from the code or creed of India, or from the initiation rite of the Chaldaeans, or from any other religion. And so far, he adds, no historical research has brought any such universal way of his attention.

There is here, surely, an admission that there is such a way even though, so far, he has no knowledge of it. Thus, nothing which he had learned with so much application concerning the liberation of the soul, nothing that he thought —or, at least, others thought—that he knew and believed satisfied him. He still felt that he needed a supreme authority which should be followed in this important matter. Notice that he says that not even in any of the genuine philosophies has he yet discovered a school that embodies a universal way for the liberation of the soul. This sufficiently proves, so it seems to me, either that the philosophy which he himself professed was not the truest or else that it did not constitute such a way.

How, in fact, can it be the truest philosophy if it does not include this way? For, what does a universal way for the liberation of the soul mean except a way by which all souls are liberated and without which, therefore, no soul is liberated? When he adds: 'Or from the code or creed of India,

or from the initiation rite of the Chaldaeans, or from any other religion,' he testifies explicitly that neither in what he learned from the Indians nor in what he learned from the Chaldaeans did he find this universal way for the liberation of the soul; yet he had to tell us that it was from the Chaldaeans that he got those divine oracles which he keeps mentioning so frequently.

Now, what does he want us to understand by a universal way for the liberation of the soul which has not yet been accepted either by any genuine philosophy or by the doctrines of those pagan people who were considered outstanding in divine affairs, as being especially curious concerning the knowledge and worship of the angels, and which he has not yet come across in his historical reading?

What can be meant by this universal way except one which is not the particular property of any one nation, but which has been divinely bestowed and is common to all nations? That such a way exists Porphyry, who was a man endowed with no mediocre talent, does not doubt. He does not believe that Divine Providence could have left the human race without this universal way for the liberation of the soul. For he does not say that this immense good and wonderful aid does not exist, but that he had not yet come across it, that it had not yet come to his notice.

No one need be surprised at this. For, Porphyry lived at a time when this universal way for the liberation of the soul —which is none other than the Christian religion—was, by divine permission, attacked by idolaters, demon worshipers, and earthly rulers in order that the number of martyrs might be completed and consecrated—and by martyrs I mean witnesses of the truth whose mission it was to show that all bodily sufferings must be endured when it is a question of remaining faithful to religion and of offering testimony to

the truth. Porphyry, then, saw all this and thought that such persecutions would soon effect the destruction of this way and that, therefore, it could not be the universal way for the liberation of the soul. He did not understand that these persecutions, which impressed him and which he feared to suffer if he chose this way, tended rather to establish this religion more solidly and to commend it to others.

This way for the liberation of souls is universal, that is, a way granted to all nations by divine mercy and, therefore, such that no one at all to whom knowledge of it has come or is to come should have asked or should ever ask: 'Why so soon' or 'Why so late?' For, the design of Him who reveals it is impenetrable to human intelligence. This is what Porphyry himself understood when he said that this gift of God had not yet been experienced nor had even come to his knowledge. But he did not deny that this gift was a real gift just because it had not yet been experienced by faith nor had come to his attention as a piece of knowledge.

This way, I repeat, is the universal way for the salvation of believers, the way referred to in the divine promise received by the faithful Abraham: 'In your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.'[1] Abraham was, in fact, a Chaldaean by birth, but, in order that he might receive such promises and that from him might be propagated a people 'delivered by angels through a mediator,'[2] a people among whom we find this universal way for the liberation of souls—a way given to all nations—he was ordered to depart from his own country and kindred and from his father's house.[3] And, as soon as he was liberated from the superstitions of the Chaldaeans, he adored and followed the one true God

1 Gen. 22.18.
2 Gal. 3.19.
3 Cf. Gen. 12.1.

and faithfully believed in the promises that had been made to him.

This universal way is the one of which it had been said in holy prophecy: 'May God have mercy on us, and bless us: may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us. That we may know thy way upon earth: thy salvation in all nations.'[4] Hence, long after, when the Saviour had taken flesh from the descendants of Abraham, He said of Himself: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.'[5]

This is the universal way which had been prophesied a long time before: 'And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go, and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'[6]

This way does not belong, then, to one but to all nations; and the Law and the Word of the Lord did not remain in Sion and Jerusalem, but went forth that it might spread throughout the world. For this reason, the Mediator Himself, after His resurrection, said to His alarmed disciples: 'All things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me. Then he opened their minds that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, Thus it is written; and thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise again from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins

4 Ps. 66.1-3.
5 John 14.6.
6 Isa. 2.2,3.

should be preached in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'[7]

This universal way for the liberation of souls is the one which the holy angels and holy prophets formerly disclosed to the few who, by the grace of God, could understand. This was especially so among the Hebrew people whose commonwealth was consecrated, as it were, into a prophecy and prediction of the City of God which is to be gathered from all nations. This way was symbolized by the tabernacle, temple, priesthood, and sacrifices; and it was predicted sometimes in explicit statements and more often by mystical intimations. But the Mediator Himself, dwelling among us in the flesh, and His blessed Apostles have revealed the grace of the New Testament and have overtly explained what, in former ages, had been covertly symbolized, according as it has pleased the wisdom of God to make revelations to the successive ages of the human race. And at all times there has been confirmation by divine miracles, a few of which I have already mentioned.

Not only have visions of angels been seen and the words of celestial messengers been heard, but holy men of God, actuated by sincere piety, have cast out unclean spirits from the bodies and senses of men, have healed the diseases and infirmities of the body; moreover, wild beasts of the earth, the waters, birds of the heavens, trees, the elements, and stars have all obeyed their divine commands; even the infernal powers have yielded to them, and the dead have arisen from the grave. I shall not speak of the miracles which belong to the Saviour Himself—those especially of His birth and resurrection. In the former, He made known to us the mystery of His Mother's virginity; in the latter, He presented to us

7 Luke 24.44-47.

an example of that state which will be the privilege of those who will be resurrected on the last day.

This way purifies the whole man, preparing for immortality every mortal part of which man is composed; and it was to obviate the necessity of special purifications, one for the part which Porphyry calls the intellectual soul, another for what he calls the spiritual soul, and still another for the body that our true and all-powerful Purifier and Saviour assumed an entire human nature. This way has never been lacking to the human race, whether at the time when these mysteries were being prophesied or when they were announced as already accomplished. Thus, no one has ever been liberated, nor is being liberated, nor ever will be liberated, except by this way.

When, therefore, Porphyry says that no universal way for the liberation of souls has yet come to his knowledge by the study of history, we must point out that nothing can be more obvious than this story which has convinced the whole world of its transcendent authenticity. For, what story can be more authentic than one which not only relates past events but includes so many prophecies which have already been accomplished that we can firmly trust that all the others will likewise be fulfilled?

Neither Porphyry nor any other Platonist can discover in our way of salvation the kind of divination and prophecy relating to earthly affairs and moral life which they discover in soothsaying and magical prognostications and rightly despise. They are right when they say that such predictions are not made by great men and are of little value. For, in some cases, such guesses are based on obscure causes, as when a doctor foresees by certain symptoms a future condition of health. In other instances, unclean demons predict deeds which they have already decided upon, thus creating the im-

pression of having a kind of right to lead the minds and hearts of wicked men to imitate their example, and this on the lowest level of human frailty.

But, it was not such unimportant things that holy men walking in the universal way of salvation were preoccupied about prophesying, except, of course, in cases where it helped to strengthen people's faith in realities which cannot be perceived by human senses nor understood easily by experience. But, there were other really great and divine events which they foretold, in so far as it was given to them to know the will of God.

The following are some of the predictions and promises revealed in our Scriptures: the coming of Christ in the flesh with all that was fulfilled in His Person and accomplished in His Name; the repentance of men and the conversion of their wills to God; the remission of sins, the grace which justifies, the faith of the saints, and the multitude of men throughout the whole world who believe in His true divinity; the collapse of the worship of idols and demons; the trials of persecutions, the purification of those who persevered and their deliverance from every evil; the day of judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the eternal damnation of the wicked, and the eternal kingdom of the glorious City of God whose citizens will everlastingly rejoice in the vision of God. And we have seen so many of these promises already accomplished that we are sure with the confidence of faith that the rest will follow.

Those who do not believe and, therefore, do not understand that the right way to the vision of God and eternal union with Him is that which is proclaimed and proved in the Holy Scripture can continue to debate but can never disprove our position.[8]

8 . . . *obpugnare possunt, sed expugnare non possunt.*

In these ten Books, perhaps, I may not have lived up to the expectations of all, but, to the extent that the true God and Lord has deigned to help me, I have satisfied some, at least, by my refutation of the objections of the pagans who prefer their own gods to the Founder of that holy City, which I undertook to discuss. The first five of these ten Books were directed against those who think that the gods should be worshiped for the sake of the goods of this life, and the following five against those who believe that the gods should be worshiped for the sake of the life after death. My next task is to keep the promise made in Book I and, with God's help, to discuss all that seems necessary concerning the origin, progress, and appropriate ends of these two cities which are inextricably intermingled, as I have said, in the concrete reality of history.

BOOK ELEVEN

Chapter 1

THE EXPRESSION, 'City of God,' which I have been using is justified by that Scripture whose divine authority puts is above the literature of all other people and brings under its sway every type of human genius —and that, not by some casual intellectual reaction, but by a disposition of Divine Providence. For, in this Scripture, we read: 'Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God';[1] and, in another psalm: 'Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain, increasing the joy of the whole earth'; and, a little later in the same psalm: 'As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God hath founded it for ever';[2] and in another text: 'The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful: the most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle. God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved.'[3]

Through these and similar passages too numerous to quote, we learn of the existence of a City of God whose Founder has inspired us with a love and longing to become its citizens. The inhabitants of the earthly city who prefer their own gods to the Founder of the holy City do not realize that He is the

1 Ps. 86.3.
2 Ps. 47.1,2,9.
3 Ps. 45.5,6.

God of gods—though not, of course, of those false, wicked and proud gods who, because they have been deprived of that unchangeable light which was meant for all, are reduced to a pitiful power and, therefore, are eager for some sort of influence and demand divine honors from their deluded subjects. He is the God of those reverent and holy gods who prefer to obey and worship one God rather than to have many others obeying and worshiping them.

In the ten preceding Books, I have done my best, with the help of our Lord and King, to refute the enemies of this City. Now, however, realizing what is expected of me and recalling what I promised, I shall begin to discuss, as well as I can, the origin, history, and destiny of the respective cities, earthly and heavenly, which, as I have said, are at present inextricably intermingled, one with the other. First, I shall explain how these two cities originated when the angels took opposing sides.

Chapter 2

Rarely and only with great effort does a mind, which has contemplated both the material and spiritual creation of the universe and discovered the mutability of all things, soar to the unchangeable substance of God and there learn that He is the sole Creator of every nature that is not divine. For, God does not speak with man through the medium of matter, with vibrations of air causing His voice to be heard by the ears of the body, nor does He use apparitions resembling bodies such as we see in dreams or in some such way—for in this latter case the speaking is to seeming ears, through a seeming medium with a seeming material space intervening, since such

apparitions are very similar to material objects. But He speaks by means of the truth itself, and to all who can hear with the mind rather than with the body.

For, He speaks to that part of man which is most excellent and which has nothing superior to it except God Himself. Now, since it is right to think or, if that is impossible, to believe that man was created to the image of God, surely man comes closer to God by that part of him which transcends those lower faculties which he has in common even with the beasts. But, since the mind, which was meant to be reasonable and intelligent, has, by dark and inveterate vices, become too weak to adhere joyously to His unchangeable light (or even to bear it) until, by gradual renewal and healing, it is made fit for such happiness, its first need was to be instructed by faith and purified.

It was in order to make the mind able to advance more confidently toward the truth that Truth itself, the divine Son of God, put on humanity without putting off His divinity[1] and built this firm path of faith so that man, by means of the God-man, could find his way to man's God. I speak of the 'Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.'[2] For it is as man that He is the Mediator and as man that He is the way. Where there is a way between a traveler and his destination, he can hope to reach it, but, if there is no way or if he does not know which way to take, what is the good of knowing the destination? Now, there is one way and one way alone that can save us from all aberrations, the Way which is both God and man—God as the goal and man as the means to reach it.[3]

1 . . . *homine adsumto, non Deo consumto* . . .
2 1 Tim. 2.5.
3 . . . *quo itur Deus, qua itur homo.*

Chapter 3

This Mediator, first through the Prophets, then by His own lips, afterwards through the Apostles, revealed whatever He considered necessary. He also inspired the Scripture, which is regarded as canonical and of supreme authority and to which we give credence concerning all those truths we ought to know and yet, of ourselves, are unable to learn. We can know by our own witness things which are presented to our senses, either interior or exterior. In fact, we say a thing is 'present' because it is 'presented' to our senses. For example, anything before our very eyes is said to be present. But, when things are not present to our senses, we cannot know them on our own authority. So we seek out and believe witnesses to whose senses, we believe, these things are or were present.

Thus, in the case of visible objects which we have not seen, we trust those who have seen them. The same is true of things known by the other senses. So, too, in the case of realities perceived by the mind and spirit, the mind is an interior sense and we speak of a man of 'good sense.' If our preceptions are of invisible things remote from our own interior sense, we ought to believe either those who have learned these truths as revealed in the Incorporeal Light or those who contemplate these truths in an abiding Vision of God.

Chapter 4

Of all visible things, the universe is the greatest; of all invisible realities, the greatest is God. That the world exists we can see; we believe in the existence of God. But there is no one we can more safely trust than God Himself in regard to the fact that it was He who made the world. Where has

He told us so? Nowhere more distinctly than in the Holy Scriptures where His Prophet said: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'[1] Well, but was the Prophet present when God made heaven and earth? No; but the Wisdom of God by whom all things were made was there. And this Wisdom, entering into holy souls, makes of them the friends and prophets of God[2] and reveals to them, silently and interiorly, what God has done.

They are taught, also, by the angels of God who 'always behold the face of the Father'[3] and are commissioned to announce His will to others. Among these Prophets was the one who announced in writing: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' And it was so fitting that faith in God should come through such a witness that he was inspired by the same Spirit of God, who had revealed these truths to him, to predict, far in advance, our own future faith.

But, why did it please the eternal God to create heaven and earth at that special time, seeing that He had not done so earlier? If the purpose of those who pose this question is to protest that the world is eternal, without beginning, and, therefore, not created by God, then they are far from the truth and are raving with the deadly disease of irreligion. For, quite apart from the voice of the Prophets, the very order, changes, and movements in the universe, the very beauty of form in all that is visible, proclaim, however silently, both that the world was created and also that its Creator could be none other than God whose greatness and beauty are both ineffable and invisible.

There are those who say that the universe was, indeed, created by God, denying a 'temporal' but admitting a 'crea-

1 Gen. 1.1.
2 Cf. Wisd. 7.27.
3 Matt. 18.10.

tional' beginning, as though, in some hardly comprehensible way, the world was made, but made from all eternity. Their purpose seems to be to save God from the charge of arbitrary rashness. They would not have us believe that a completely new idea of creating the world suddenly occurred to Him or that a change of mind took place in Him in whom there can be no change.

I do not see, however, how this position is consistent with their stand in other matters, especially in regard to the soul. For, if, as they must hold, the soul is co-eternal with God, they have no way to explain how a completely new misery can begin in an eternally existing soul.

For, if they say that its misery and happiness ceaselessly alternate, then they are obliged to conclude that this alternation will go on forever. Thus, an absurdity follows: though the soul is called blessed, it will not be so in fact, since it foresees its future misery and disgrace; and, even if it does not foresee its future disgrace or misery but thinks that it will be happy forever, its happiness will depend upon deception. And this is as foolish a statement as could possibly be made.

But, if they suppose that the soul has been alternately happy and unhappy through infinite ages but that, from now on, being set free, it will never return to its former misery, they are, in fact, convinced that the soul was never truly blessed but that at last it begins to enjoy a new and genuine happiness. Thus, they admit that something new, important, and remarkable happens within the soul which had never occurred to it before from all eternity. And, if they deny that God's eternal providence included the cause of this new experience of the soul, they likewise deny that He is the Author of its beatitude—which is an abominable piece of impiety. If, on the other hand, they claim that by a new decree God determined that the soul should be eternally blessed, how can they

show that He is free from that mutability which even they repudiate?

Finally, if they say that the soul was created in time but will not perish in any future time, like numbers which begin with 'one' but never end, and, therefore, that having experienced misery, it will be freed from it, never again to return to it, they will surely have no hesitation in admitting that this is compatible with the immutability of God's decision. This being so, they should also believe that the world could be made in time without God who made it having to change the eternal decision of His will.

Chapter 5

Before attempting to reply to those who, while agreeing with us that God is the Creator of the world, question us about the time at which it was created, we must see what response they make when we ask them about the space in which it was created. For, just as they ask why it was made then and not earlier, we may ask why it was made here and not elsewhere. Because, if they excogitate infinite periods of time before the world, in which they cannot see how God could have had nothing to do, they ought to conceive of infinite reaches of space beyond the visible universe. And, if they maintain that the Omnipotent can never be inactive, will they not logically be forced to dream with Epicurus of innumerable universes? (There will be merely this difference, that, while he asserts that these worlds originate and disintegrate by the fortuitous movements of atoms, they will hold that they are created by the work of God.) This is the conclusion if they insist on the premise that there is an interminable immensity of space stretching in all directions in which

God cannot remain passive and that those imaginary worlds, like this visible one, are indestructible.

The present discussion is limited to those who believe with us that God is spiritual and the Creator of all existences except Himself, first, because there is something improper in inviting materialists to discuss a religious question; and second, because even in pagan circles the Platonists have gained a prestige and authority beyond that of other philosophers—for the simple reason that, however far they are from the truth, they are much nearer to it than any of the others.

Now, the Platonists hold that the divine substance is neither confined nor limited nor distributed in space; they acknowledge very properly that He is spiritually and completely present everywhere. Will they then say that He is absent from the infinitely immense spaces out beyond and is occupied only in the relatively tiny space that contains this cosmos? I do not think that they will be foolish enough to go this far.

Let us agree, then, that they admit a single cosmos of immense material bulk, indeed, yet, finite and determined in its own place, and created by the work of God. Now, whatever reason they can give for God's cessation from work in the infinite spaces outside the world, let them offer the same solution to their problem of God ceasing from activity during the infinite stretches of time before the creation of the world.

Now, it does not follow that it was by chance rather than by a divine reason that God localized the world in this spot instead of in another, even though no human reason can comprehend the divine reason and although this particular place has no special merit that it should be chosen in preference to an infinite number of others. Nor, in the same way, does it follow that we should suppose that it was by accident that God created the world at that specific time rather than before, even though previous times had been uniformly passing

by throughout an infinite past and there was no difference which would cause this time to be chosen in preference to another.

Of course, they may admit that it is silly to imagine infinite space since there is no such thing as space beyond the cosmos. In that case, let this be the answer: It is silly for them to excogitate a past time during which God was unoccupied, for the simple reason that there was no such thing as time before the universe was made.

Chapter 6

The distinguishing mark between time and eternity is that the former does not exist without some movement and change, while in the latter there is no change at all. Obviously, then, there could have been no time had not a creature been made whose movement would effect some change. It is because the parts of this motion and change cannot be simultaneous, since one part must follow another, that, in these shorter or longer intervals of duration, time begins. Now, since God, in whose eternity there is absolutely no change, is the Creator and Ruler of time, I do not see how we can say that He created the world after a space of time had elapsed unless we admit, also, that previously some creature had existed whose movements would mark the course of time.

Again, sacred and infallible Scripture tells us that in the beginning God created heaven and earth in order. Now, unless this meant that nothing had been made before, it would have been stated that whatever else God had made before was created in the beginning. Undoubtedly, then, the world was made not in time but together with time. For, what is made in time is made after one period of time and before

another, namely, after a past and before a future time. But, there could have been no past time, since there was nothing created by whose movements and change time could be measured.

The fact is that the world was made simultaneously with time, if, with creation, motion and change began. Now this seems evident from the order of the first six or seven days. For, the morning and evening of each of these days are counted until on the sixth day all that had been created during this time was complete. Then, on the seventh day, in a mysterious revelation, we are told that God ceased from work. As for these 'days,' it is difficult, perhaps impossible to think —let alone to explain in words—what they mean.

Chapter 7

Of course, what we mean by the 'days' we know in experience are those that have a morning because the sun rises and an evening because the sun sets. But the first three 'days' of creation passed without benefit of sun, since, according to Scripture, the sun was made on the fourth day. Of course, there is mention in the beginning that 'light' was made by the Word of God, and that God separated it from darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night. But no experience of our senses can tell us just what kind of 'light' it was and by what kind of alternating movement it caused 'morning' and 'evening.' Not even our intellects can comprehend what is meant, yet we can have no hestitation in believing the fact.

Perhaps there is a material light in the far reaches of the universe which are out of sight. Or it may mean the light from which the sun was afterwards kindled. Or, perhaps, under the name of light, there is signified that holy City com-

posed of blessed angels and saints of which the Apostle speaks: 'That Jerusalem which is above, our eternal mother in heaven.'[1] Compare what he says elsewhere: 'For you are all children of the light and children of the day. We are not of night, nor of darkness.'[2] The only question is whether we can find an appropriate meaning for the 'morning' and 'evening' of such a day.

At any rate, the creature's knowledge in comparison with that of the Creator might be said to be dim as twilight. Yet, it breaks into dawn and brightens to morning when it is employed in the praise and love of God. Nor does the darkness of night ever fall so long as the Creator is not abandoned for love of the creature. Note that Scripture never mentions the word 'night' when speaking of those days one after the other. Nowhere does it say: 'There was night,' but: 'There was evening and morning, the first day.'[3] And so of the second day and the rest. It is as though the meaning were: The knowledge of a created thing, seen just as it is, is dimmer, so to speak, than when the thing is contemplated in the wisdom of God, as in the art by which it was made. Therefore, evening is a more suitable term than night. However, as I said, this evening twilight turns into morning as soon as knowledge turns to the praise and love of its Creator.

When the creature does this in the knowledge of itself, this is the first day; when it does so in the knowledge of the firmament—the heavens between the waters above and the waters below—this is the second day. So, too, in the knowledge of the earth and sea and of all vegetation on the earth, this is the third day; in the knowledge of the sun and moon and of all the stars, this is the fourth day; in the knowledge of

1 Cf. Gal. 4.26; St. Augustine's text, unlike the Vulgate, has *aeterna* (eternal), not *libera* (free).
2 Thess. 5.5.
3 Gen. 1.5.

all the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, this is the fifth day; in the knowledge of all terrestrial animals and, lastly, of man himself, this is the sixth day.

Chapter 8

The statement that God rested from all His works on the seventh day and sanctified it should not be interpreted in a childish way, as if God had labored in His operations. For He 'spoke and they were made,'[1] not, indeed, by an audible and fleeting word, but by a spiritual and eternal one. But, the rest of God signifies the repose of those who rest in Him, just as the joy of a home means the gladness of those in a home who rejoice, although it is not the house but something else that makes them rejoice.

This is all the more so if the beauty of the house itself makes those who dwell in it rejoice. For here we are not merely using the figure of speech in which what is contained is signified by what contains—as when we say the theater applauded or speak of the mooing meadows, meaning the spectators in the one case and the oxen in the other. Here we are using a second figure of speech in which the cause is described in terms of the effect—as when a letter is said to be joyful because it makes its readers rejoice.

And so, when the inspired writer states that God rested, his words are most appropriately interpreted to mean the rest of those who rest in God and of whose rest God is the cause. And the prophecy also promises to those to whom it speaks and for whom it was written that, if by faith they have drawn as close to God as is possible in this life, then, after doing the good works which God operates in and through them, they

1 Ps. 148.5.

shall enjoy in Him eternal rest. This promise was symbolized, for the chosen people of God, by the sabbath rest prescribed in their law. I shall speak more in detail about this in its proper place.[2]

Chapter 9

Since my present intention is to say something about the origin of the holy City, I must first deal with the holy angels who form such a large and, indeed, the most blessed part of that City, since they have never departed from it. With God's grace I shall interpret those passages of Holy Scripture which seem to me relevant to this subject. When Scripture speaks of the creation of the world, it does not indicate clearly whether, or in what order, the angels were created. But, if they are alluded to at all, it is perhaps under the name of the heavens in the words: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,'[1] or, more likely, under the term light, about which I was just speaking. My reason for thinking that they were not omitted is because it is written that God rested on the seventh day from all the works which He had made, although the first line of Holy Scripture, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' implies that before the creation of heaven and earth God had made nothing. He began, then, with heaven and earth. Now, the earth, as Scripture adds, was at first invisible and formless and, since light was not yet created, darkness covered the abyss. By 'abyss' is meant a conglomeration of earth and water; and, of course, with no light, there is necessarily darkness. But if, as we are told, all things were created and ordered and the work

2 Cf. Vol. 3, 22.30.

1 Gen. 1.1.

was completed in six days, how could the angels be omitted as if they were not included in the works of God from which He rested on the seventh day?

Actually, the fact that the angels are the work of God is not omitted in the account of creation, yet it is not expressly mentioned. Elsewhere, however, Holy Scripture bears luminous witness to the fact. Thus, the canticle of the three children in the furnace, after saying, 'All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord,' enumerates these works and includes the angels.[2] Again, the Psalmist sings: 'Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise ye Him in the high places. Praise ye Him, all His angels, praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, O sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars and light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, praise the name of the Lord. For He spoke, and they were made: He commanded, and they were created.'[3]

Here, unmistakably and by divine inspiration the angels are said to have been created by God, since they are included among all the other celestial things of which Scripture declares: 'He commanded, and they were created.' And, surely, no one would be rash enough to hold that the angels were created after all the other things mentioned in the six days of creation. If so, his folly can be refuted by the equally authoritative Scriptural passage where God says: 'When the stars were made all my angels loudly praised me.'[4] The angels, therefore, existed before the stars; and the stars were created on the fourth day. Must we say, then, that they were made on the third day? By no means. For it is clear what was created on that day: the earth was separated from the water, the two elements each taking its proper form, while earth brought forth its vegetation.

2 Dan. 3.57.58.
3 Ps. 148.1.5.
4 Cf. Job 38.7.

Perhaps, then, on the second day? The answer is again 'no.' For, on that day, between the waters above and those below, a firmament was formed and was called the heavens; and in this the stars were created on the fourth day. There is, then, no doubt that, if the angels are included in the works of God during these six days, they are that light which was called day; and their unity is stressed by the fact that the day is called not the 'first day' but 'one day.' Nor are the second, third, and so on really other days. They are all the same 'one day,' repeated to complete the number six or seven, and to signify that knowledge which is six or sevenfold, namely, the sixfold knowledge of the works of God and the seventh knowledge of His rest.

If, in the passage of Scripture where God says: 'Let there be light and there was light,' we are right in taking this light to mean the angels, then we are sure that they are made participators of His eternal light, which is nothing other than the unchangeable Wisdom by which all things were made, and which we call the only-begotten Son of God. Thus, the angels, illumined by that Light which created them, became light and were called 'day' because they participated in that unchangeable Light and Day which is the Word of God, by whom they and all things were made.

For, 'the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world'[5] illumines every pure angel that he may be light not in himself but in God. And, once an angel rejects this Light, he becomes impure. Thus, all those who are called unclean spirits are no longer light in the Lord but darkness in themselves, being deprived of a participation in His eternal light. For, evil has no positive nature; what we call evil is merely the lack of something that is good.

5 John 1.9.

Chapter 10

There is, accordingly, a good which alone is simple and, therefore, which alone is unchangeable—and this is God. This good has created all goods; but these are not simple and, therefore, they are mutable. They were created, I repeat, that is, they were made, not begotten. For, what is begotten of the simple good is likewise simple and is what the Begetter is. These two we call the Father and the Son and, together with their Spirit, are one God. This Spirit of the Father and of the Son is called in Sacred Scripture, in a very special sense, the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is other than the Father and the Son because He is neither the Father nor the Son. I say 'other than,' not 'different from,' because, equally with them, He is the simple, unchangeable, co-eternal Good. This Trinity is one God. And, although it is a Trinity, it is none the less simple. For, we do not say that the nature of this good is simple because the Father alone shares in it, or the Son alone, or the Holy Spirit alone. Nor do we say with the Sabellian heretics that it is but a nominal Trinity without subsistent Persons. Our reason for calling it simple is because it is what it has—with the exception of the real relations in which the Persons stand to each other.

For, it is true that the Father *has* a Son, yet He *is* not the Son. And the Son *has* a Father, yet *is* not the Father. Therefore, as regards Himself, without reference to His relation with the others, the Father is what He has. Thus, when He is said to be living, we mean that He has life and is the very life He has.

When a nature is called simple we mean that it can have nothing that it can lose; that it cannot be different from what it has, as a cup is different from the wine it holds, a body

from its color, the air from its light or warmth, the mind from its wisdom. None of these is what it has; the cup is not the liquid, nor the body its color, nor the air its light or warmth, nor the mind its wisdom. All of these, therefore, can be deprived of what they have; they can be converted into other states or qualities: for example, the cup may be emptied of the contents of which it was full; the body may lose its color; the air may darken and grow cold; and the mind may lose its sanity.

Although the incorruptible body which is promised to the saints in the resurrection cannot, indeed, lose the quality of its incorruption, yet its permanent bodily substance and its quality of incorruptibility are not one and the same thing. For the quality of incorruptibility is entire and uniform throughout the separate parts of the body. It is not greater in one member and less in another, since there is no part that is more incorruptible than another. The body, indeed, is greater in its totality than in each part, and, although one part is larger, another smaller, the former is not more incorruptible than the latter. The body, therefore, which is not entire in each of its parts is one thing; incorruptibility which is complete throughout is another thing, since every part of the incorruptible body, though unequal to the rest, is equally incorrupt. For example, the finger, though less than the whole hand, is not, therefore, less incorruptible; although unequal in size, they are both equal in incorruptibility. Thus, although incorruptibility is inseparable from an incorruptible body, the substance by which it is a body is one thing and the quality by which it is incorruptible is another. The body is not, in spite of this inseparability, identical with what it has.

So, too, with the soul. Although it will be forever wise when redeemed in eternity, yet it will be wise only by participating in the unchangeable Wisdom, which is not the soul

itself. So with the air. If it were never to be deprived of its infused light, it would still not be identical with that light by which it is illuminated. I am not suggesting that the soul is air, as some have supposed who were unable to conceive of a spiritual nature, although, for all their dissimilarity, there is here a kind of analogy which makes it reasonable to say that the immaterial soul is made luminous by the immaterial light of the simple Wisdom of God, much as we say that the material air is made luminous by the material light. And, as air grows dark when dispossessed of this light—for what is called darkness in this place or that is nothing else than air lacking light—so we may say that the soul grows dark when deprived of the light of Wisdom.

Accordingly, whatever is authentically[1] and truly divine is said to be simple because its qualities and its substance are one and the same, and because it is not by participation that it is divine, or wise or holy. It is true that in Sacred Scripture the spirit of wisdom is said to be manifold by reason of its fullness. However, what the Holy Spirit is and what is has are one, and all that it has is one.

There are not many wisdoms but only one. And in this Wisdom there is an infinite and inexhaustible treasury of intelligible realities containing all the invisible and unchangeable ideas[2] of all the visible and changeable existences which were made by this Wisdom. For, God has made nothing unknowingly; not even a human craftsman can be said to do so. But, if He knew all that He created, He created only those things which He knew. This conclusion suggests a striking but true idea: that this world could not be known by us unless it first existed; but it could not have existed unless it had first been known to God.[3]

1 *principaliter.*
2 *rationes.*
3 . . . *iste mundus nobis notus esse non posset, nisi esset; Deo autem nisi notus esset, esse non posset.*

Chapter 11

This being so, the spirits called angels were never, in any sense, at any time, partakers of darkness, but, from the moment of their creation, they were made beings of light. They were not merely created in order to exist and to live, but they were also illumined, so that they might live in wisdom and happiness. Some angels, however, turned away from this illumination and failed to attain this eminence of wisdom and blessedness which is unthinkable apart from the possession and assurance of everlastingness. These angels, however, even if they wished, could not lose their nature in so far as it is a life of reason—although not of wisdom.

Although no one can define the precise measure of their wisdom before their fall, one thing is certain. We cannot presume that they shared in wisdom equally with the angels who enjoy a plenitude of true happiness precisely because they were never deceived concerning its eternity. For, if they had participated in equal measure, then, because they were equally certain, they would have remained equally and eternally blessed. For, no matter how long a life may last, we cannot, in truth, call it eternal if at length it must have an end, since life merely implies living, whereas eternal means having no end.

It does not follow that every thing that is eternal is, therefore, blessed—for the pain of Hell is called eternal. However, if no life is truly and perfectly happy unless it is eternally so, it follows that the life of the fallen angels was not blessed since, whether they knew it or not, their blessedness was destined to end and, therefore, was not eternal. If they knew this, it was fear, and, if they did not, then it was error that prevented them from being blessed. Even if they were not so completely ignorant as to believe in a false expectation but

were in doubt whether or not their happiness would be eternal, then this very uncertainty itself concerning such a blessed destiny would be at variance with the plenitude of beatitude which we believe the holy angels enjoyed.

Here we do not restrict the term 'blessed life' to so narrow a meaning that we ascribe it to God alone. His beatitude is so truly perfect that there can be none greater. In comparison, what does even the beatitude of the blessed angels amount to, although they are completely happy according to their capacity?

Chapter 12

The angels are not the only rational or intellectual creatures who we think should be called blessed. For no one will dare to deny that the first human beings in Paradise were blessed before their sin, although they were uncertain about the duration or eternity of their happiness—which, in fact, would have been eternal if they had not sinned. And even today we rightly regard as happy all those whom we see leading a good and holy life in the hope of future immortality, untroubled in conscience and with easy access to God's forgiveness for the sins which are due to the frailty of human nature.

These saints, however, although certain of their reward if they persevere, can never be sure of their perseverance. For, no man can be sure that he will continue to the end to act and advance in grace unless this fact is revealed to him by God. In His just and secret counsel, God, although He never deceives anyone, gives but few assurances in this matter.

Consequently, as regards the enjoyment of present happiness, the first man in Paradise was more fortunate than

any saint now subject to weakness and mortality. But, as regards the hope of a future reward, any man who does not merely suppose but who knows, on the authority of infallible Truth, that he will enjoy, beyond the reach of evil and in the company of angels, union with the most high God is far happier in whatever state of physical sufferings he may be than the man who, even in the great delight of Paradise, was uncertain of his fall.

Chapter 13

From what has been said, the obvious conclusion is that the beatitude desired by an intelligent being as its proper end will result only from the combination of an uninterrupted enjoyment of that immutable good which is God with deliverance from any doubt or deception concerning the eternity of its continuance. With holy confidence, we believe that the angels of light possess this kind of blessedness. By a process of reasoning, we gather that the bad angels, who were deprived of this light by their own perverseness, did not have this beatitude even before their fall. However, if they lived some time before they sinned, we must believe that they were endowed with a measure of happiness lacking in any foreknowledge of its continuance.

I know it may seem difficult to believe that, while the angels were so created that some were in ignorance concerning their perseverance or defection and others were infallibly assured of the eternity of their bliss, yet all were created from the beginning equally blessed and remained so until the angels who are now evil fell voluntarily from their light and love. Nevertheless, it is much more difficult to suppose that the holy angels are uncertain of their eternal happiness and so are ig-

norant of a truth about themselves which we have been able to learn from Holy Scripture.

For, there is no Catholic who does not know that a good angel can no more turn into a devil than a bad one can return to the ranks of the angels who are good. For, in the Gospel, the Truth promises the saints and the faithful that they will be 'as angels of God in heaven'[1] and that they will go 'into everlasting life.'[2] Now, if we are assured that we shall never lose that immortal blessedness, whereas the angels are not sure, then we shall be better off than they and not their equals. However, since the Truth cannot deceive and since we are to be their equals, the deduction is that the angels have the certain assurance that their happiness it eternal.

Now the evil angels could not have had this same assurance. Since their happiness was destined to end, there was for them no eternal happiness about which to be certain. Thus, we are left with the conclusion that the angels were unequal at the time of creation, or, if equal, that the holy angels were given foreknowledge of their eternal blessedness after the fall of the others. Of course, it might be objected that our Lord's words in the Gospel concerning the Devil, 'He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth,'[3] should be interpreted to mean not only that he was a murderer from the beginning of the human race—when a man was created whom he could destroy by deception—but, also, that he did not stand in the truth even from the beginning of his own creation. Consequently, according to this interpretation, he could never have been blessed together with the other holy angels, since, refusing to be sub-

1 Matt. 22.31.
2 Matt. 25.46.
3 John 8.44.

ject to his Creator, he took an arrogant joy in his own private sovereignty, thereby becoming a most deceitful liar. But, the power of the Almighty cannot be evaded. And anyone who refuses to hold to the truth by a holy subjection strives by a proud elevation of himself to make pretense of being what he is not in reality. Thus, the words of St. John the Apostle, 'The devil sins from the beginning,'[4] may be taken to mean that from the moment of his creation the Devil refused the grace which only a will devoutly obedient to God can receive.

Whoever holds this opinion at least disagrees with the Manichaeans and similar poisonous heretics who hold that the Devil derived his peculiarly evil nature from some Principle opposed to God. Such heretics are both foolish and futile, for they believe in the authority of this Scriptural text, but have not noticed that our Lord did not say: 'He was a stranger to the truth' but that 'He has not stood in the truth.' Our Lord meant that the Devil had fallen from the truth, in which, if he had stood firm, he would have so participated as to remain forever happy with the holy angels.

Chapter 14

Notice that our Lord adds, as if in answer to our question why the Devil did not stand in the truth: 'Because there is no truth in him.'[1] Of course, it would have been in him if he had persevered in it. Certainly, the phraseology is unusual. The words, 'He has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him,' seem to suggest that the cause of his not standing in the truth is the fact that the truth is not in him;

4 1 John 3.8.

1 John 8.44.

whereas, the reason why the truth is not in him is because he has not continued in the truth.

We find the same phraseology in one of the psalms: 'I have cried to thee, for thou, O God hast heard me.'[2] Here, you would think, the Psalmist should have said: 'Thou hast heard me, O God, because I have cried to thee.' But, first, he declared: 'I have cried.' Then, as if in answer to a question, 'How do you prove that you prayed?' he proves this fact by the effect, namely, that God answered it. It is as if he had said: 'The proof that I have cried to thee is that thou hast heard me.'

Chapter 15

Take another of St. John's texts: 'The devil sins from the beginning.'[1] The Manichaeans do not understand that, if the Devil is evil by nature, there can be no question of sin at all. They have no reply to the witness of the Prophets, for example, where Isaias, representing the Devil figuratively in the person of the Prince of Babylon, asks: 'How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning?'[2] or where Ezechiel says: 'Thou wast in the pleasure of the paradise of God: every precious stone was thy covering.'[3] These texts indicate that the Devil was for a time without sin. In fact, a little further on we have the more explicit statement: 'Thou walked in thy days without sin.'[4]

Now, since the above is the only tenable interpretation of

2 Ps. 16.6.

1 1 John 3.8.
2 Isa. 14.12.
3 Ezech. 28.13.
4 *Ambulasti in diebus tuis sine vitio.* The Vulgate reads: *Perfectus in viis tuis a die conditionis tuae donec inventa est iniquitas in te* (Ezech. 28.19).

these passages, we should also interpret the text, 'He has not stood in the truth,' as meaning that he was created in truth but did not persevere in it. And the statement, 'The devil sins from the beginning,' should be understood in the sense that he sinned not from the beginning of his creation but from the beginning of sin, because sin had its beginning with his pride.

Again, take that text in the book of Job concerning the Devil: 'This is the beginning of creation of God which He made to be a sport to His angels.'[5] Notice what seems to be an echo of this in a verse of the psalm: 'This sea dragon which thou hast formed to play therein.'[6] Job does not mean that the Devil was created to be the sport of the angels from the beginning, but was condemned to this punishment after his sin. His beginning, therefore, is the creation by God. There is no nature even among the least and lowest of beasts that He did not fashion. From Him has proceeded all measure, all form, all order—the properties without which nothing can either be or be conceived.[7] How much more, then, is this true of the angelic nature, which is higher in dignity than all the other creations of God.

Chapter 16

Among all things which somehow exist and which can be distinguished from God who made them, those that live are ranked higher than those that do not, that is to say, those that have the power of reproduction or even of appetite are above those which lack this faculty. In that order of living things,

5 Job. 40.14 (Septuagint).
6 Ps. 103.26.
7 Cf. above, 5.11.

the sentient are superior to the non-sentient, for example, animals to trees. Among sentient beings, the intelligent are higher than the non-intelligent, as with men and cattle. Among the intelligent, the immortal are superior to the mortal, as angels to men.

This is the hierarchy according to the order of nature. However, we have another and variable standard of values which is based on utility. By this standard, sometimes we so prefer certain non-sentient things to others which are sentient that, had we the power, we would annihilate these latter, reckless of the place they hold in the pattern of nature or wilfully sacrificing them to our own convenience. For, who would not rather have food in his house than mice, money than fleas? This is less astonishing when we recall that, in spite of the great dignity of human nature, the price for a horse is often more than that for a slave and the price for a jewel more than that for a maid.

Thus, a person who evaluates according to reason has far more freedom of choice than one who is driven by want or drawn by passion. For, reason can see the gradation of things in an objective hierarchy of values, while necessity must consider them as means to an end. Reason seeks for what seems true in the light of the intellect, while passion craves for what seems pleasant to the senses.

So, too, in evaluating rational natures, the weight, so to speak, of will and love is so great that, although in the order of nature angels are higher than men, in the scale of morality good men outweigh bad angels.

Chapter 17

We are right to understand 'beginning' in the following

text as referring to the Devil's nature, not to his malice: 'This is the beginning of the creation of God.'[1] For, undoubtedly, before we can have the canker of maliciousness, there must have been a nature that was not previously cankered. Moreover, any canker is so contrary to nature that it must be harmful. In fact, departure from God would not be a defect except in a being whose nature it was to be united with God. Thus, even a bad will is clear evidence of a good nature.

Now, God is not only the supremely beneficent Creator of good natures, but also the just Ruler of evil wills. So, while creatures can use a good nature for a bad purpose, He can use bad wills for a good one. Thus, God has brought it to pass that the Devil, who was good by creation but evil by choice, should be cast down from heaven and be mocked by the angels whenever the temptations of the Devil which are meant to injure the saints turn to their profit.

It was because God foresaw, in creating the Devil, both the future malice and the good which He would draw from it, that the Psalmist says: 'This sea dragon which thou hast formed to play therein.'[2] The point here is that, while God, in His goodness, made the Devil good, He found a way, by His foresight, to use the Devil's future wickedness.

Chapter 18

God would never have created a single angel—not even a single man—whose future wickedness He foresaw, unless, at the same time, He knew of the good which could come of this evil. It was as though He meant the harmony of history, like the beauty of a poem, to be enriched by antithetical ele-

1 Job 40.14 *Initum figmenti;* not, as in the Vulgate, *principium viarum.*
2 Ps. 103.26.

ments.[1] For, the figure of speech called 'antithesis' is the most elegant among the ornaments of rhetoric. The Latin for *autítheta* would be *opposita* or, better, *contraposita;* and although these words are not in common use, Latin, like every other language in the world, adopts this ornament of style. Thus, even the Apostle Paul in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians uses antitheses with rhetorical effect: 'With the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left; in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet truthful, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and behold, we live, as chastised but not killed, as sorrowfull yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing yet possesing all things.'[2]

Now, just as this kind of antithesis lends beauty to literary style, so, in the antitheses of history, there is a rhetoric not of words, but of facts, that makes for beauty.[3] This is the idea which the Book of Ecclesiasticus expresses clearly as follows: 'Good is set against evil, and life against death; so also is the sinner against a just man. And so look upon all the works of the Most High. Two and two, and one against another.'[4]

Chapter 19

Even the obscurity of divine Scripture is of value in this that, when one man thinks this and another that, many interpretations of the truth are conceived and brought forth into

1 . . . *ita ordinem saeculorum tamquam pulcherrimum carmen etiam ex quibusdam quasi antithetis honestaret.*
2 2 Cor. 6.7-10.
3 . . . *ita quadam non verborum, sed rerum eloquentia contrariorum obpositione saeculi pulchritudo conponitur.*
4 Eccli. 33.15.

the light of knowledge. Thus, an obscure passage can be construed in the light either of proved and manifested facts or of other passages where the meaning is not in doubt. Sometimes, after much debate, the very meaning of the author himself is at length discovered; at other times, this meaning remains obscure, but at least the discussion of a profound obscurity serves on occasion for declaring other things that are true. At any rate, there is one view which does not seem to me at variance with God's works, namely, that, once we understand the creation of the angels by the making of the first light, then we should take the distinction between the good and bad angels as the meaning of the words: 'God separated the light from the darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night.'[1] For, the only one who could discern this distinction was He who, even before their fall, could foresee that they would fall and that, once they were deprived of the light of truth, they would remain in the darkness of pride.

As for the separation between the light of what we know as day and the darkness of night—that, God effected by commanding those lights in the sky which are most obvious to our senses: 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate day from night.' And a little further on, Scripture says: 'So it was. God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the smaller one to rule the night, and he made the stars. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to shed light upon the earth, to rule the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness.'[2]

However, the same God could also divide that 'light' (which means the society of holy angels whose minds are aglow with the illumination of Truth) from that contrary

1 Gen. 1.4,5.
2 Gen. 1.14,16-18.

'darkness' (which means the society of evil angels whose darkened minds turned away from the light of justice), for to Him, their future evil, which was one not of nature but of choice, could be neither hidden nor uncertain.

Chapter 20

We should not fail to notice that, in the Scripture, it was immediately after recording God's words,' "Let there be light," and there was light,' that we are told: 'God saw that the light was good.'[1] This was not said after He separated light from darkness and called the light day and the darkness night, lest it might appear that God testified to as much satisfaction in the darkness as in the light. It is different in the case of that darkness which is not evil and which is separated by the luminaries of heaven from the light we see with our eyes. The approval, 'God saw that it was good,' is here inserted, not before, but after, the division: 'God set them in the firmament of the heavens to shed light upon the earth, to rule the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good.'[2] Both this kind of light and this kind of darkness pleased Him because both are without sin.

But, in that passage where it is recorded that God said: ' "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good,' and in the narrative following: 'God separated that light from the darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night,'[3] Scripture does not add the phrase, 'And God saw that it was good.' Here, it was omitted lest both should be considered good, whereas, in fact, one of them was

1 Gen. 1.3,4.
2 Gen. 1.17,18.
3 Gen. 1.4,5.

evil—not, of course, by nature but by its own fault. Therefore, in this case, it is the light alone which pleased the Creator, while the angelic darkness was meant merely as a part of a divine pattern, not as something pleasing in itself.[4]

Chapter 21

The only meaning we can give to the constant refrain, 'God saw that it was good,' is God's approval of a work as having been fashioned in accordance with that art which is His own wisdom. So far is it from being true that God first learned that His work was good after it was made that, had He not known this already, not one of the things He made would have been created. Since, therefore, what He sees is good would not have made unless He had seen that it was good before He made it, we must say: He teaches, He does not learn, that it is good.[1]

Plato dared to use an even stronger expression, namely, that, at the completion of creation, God was elated with delight.[2] Obviously, he was not foolish enough to think that God's beatitude was increased by the novelty of His work; he merely wished to indicate that God rejoiced in His finished product, just as, like an artist, He had been pleased in designing it. Plato does not imply in any way that the knowledge of God is subject to change, as though non-existing, existing, and no-longer-existing things were known with different kinds of cognition. For, not in our way does God look forward to the future, see the present, and look back upon the past, but

4 . . . *tenebrae autem angelicae, etsi fuerant ordinandae, non tamen fuerant adprobandae.*

1 *Docet bonum esse, non discit.*
2 *Timaeus* 37C.

in a manner remotely and profoundly unlike our way of thinking.

God's mind does not pass from one thought to another. His vision is utterly unchangeable. Thus, He comprehends all that takes place in time—the not-yet-existing future, the existing present, and the no-longer-existing past—in an immutable and eternal present. He does not see differently with the eyes and the mind, for He is not composed of soul and body. Nor is there any then, now, and afterwards in His knowledge, for, unlike ours, it suffers no change with triple time—present, past, and future. With Him, 'there is no change, nor shadow of alteration.'[3]

Neither does His attention pass from thought to thought, for His knowledge embraces everything in a single spiritual contuition.[4] His knowledge of what happens in time, like His movement of what changes in time, is completely independent of time. That is why it was one and the same to God to see that what He had made was good and to see that is was good to make it. When He saw what He had made, His knowledge was neither doubled nor in any way increased—in the sense that it could have been less before He made what He saw. For He could not have been so perfect a Creator without so perfect a knowledge that nothing could be added to it by seeing what He created.

Hence, we can see that, if the only truth Scripture needed to tell us was *who* created the light, it would have sufficed to say: God made the light. And if there was also a reason for telling us *how* God made it, it was enough to report: 'God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.' Thus, we would know not only that God created the light but that He did so by means of the Word. But, since there are three

3 James 1.17.
4 . . . *incorporeo contuitu simul adsunt cuncta quae novit.*

truths concerning every creature which we needed to know —namely: Who made it? How did he make it? and Why? —Scripture relates: 'God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good.' So, if we ask, 'who made it?' the answer is 'God'; if we ask, 'how?' the answer is that God said: 'Let it be. And it was done'; if we ask, 'why?' the answer is 'Because it is good.'

There is no Creator higher than God, no art more efficacious than the Word of God, no better reason why something good should be created than that the God who creates is good. Even Plato says that the best reason for creating the world is that good things should be made by a good God. It may be that he read this Scriptural passage or learned it from those who had, or, by his own keen insight, he clearly saw that 'the invisible things' of God are 'understood by the things that are made,'[5] or, perhaps, he learned from others who had clearly seen this.

Chapter 22

The explanation, then, of the goodness of creation is the goodness of God. It is a reasonable and sufficient explanation whether considered in the light of philosophy or of faith. It puts an end to all controversies concerning the origin of the world. Nevertheless, certain heretics remain unconvinced, on the ground that many things in creation are unsuitable and even harmful to that poor and fragile mortality of the flesh which, of course, is no more than the just penalty of sin. The heretics mention, for example, fire, cold, wild beasts, and things like that, without considering how wonderful such things are in themselves and in their proper place and how

5 Cf. Rom. 1.20.

beautifully they fit into the total pattern of the universe making, as it were, their particular contributions to the commonweal of cosmic beauty. Nor have they observed how valuable they are even to us if only we use them well and wisely. Consider, for instance, poison. It is deadly when improperly used, but when properly applied it turns out to be a health-giving medicine, while, on the contrary, some of those things we like, such as food, drink, and sunlight, when immoderately and unwisely used are seen to be harmful.

Thus does Divine Providence teach us not to be foolish in finding fault with things but, rather, to be diligent in finding out their usefulness or, if our mind and will should fail us in the search, then to believe that there is some hidden use still to be discovered, as in so many other cases, only with great difficulty. This effort needed to discover hidden usefulness either helps our humility or hits our pride, since absolutely no natural reality is evil and the only meaning of the word 'evil' is the privation of good.

What, however, is true is that there is a hierarchy of created realities, from earthly to heavenly, from visible to invisible, some being better than others, and that the very reason of their inequality is to make possible an existence for them all. For, God is the kind of artist whose greatness in His masterpieces is not lessened in His minor works—which, of course, are not significant by reason of any sublimity in themselves, since they have none, but only by reason of the wisdom of their Designer. Take the case of the beauty of the human form. Shave off one eyebrow and the loss to the mere mass of the body is insignificant. But what a blow to beauty! For, beauty is not a matter of bulk but of the symmetry and proportion of the members.

It is no wonder that heretics, who hold that some positive evil has sprung and sprouted from an evil principle radically

opposed to God, refuse to accept this explanation of creation —that a God who is good should create things that are good. The prefer to believe that God was driven, by the sheer necessity of quelling the Evil One in rebellion against Him, to build the bulwarks of a material universe, and thus mingle the goodness of His nature with evil in order to coerce and conquer evil; so that the divine nature, prostituted and oppressed, is now in shameful and cruel captivity and can be purified and emancipated only with very great difficulty. Even then, one part will remain impervious to purification, and this is to be the prison and the chains to hold the conquered enemy in subjection.

The only way for the Manichaeans to cease from such folly—not to say insanity—is to acknowledge the nature of God to be, as it is in truth, unchangeable and absolutely incorruptible and, therefore, invulnerable; and to get in line with Christian orthodoxy, by believing that the soul—which is liable to a change for the worse by its own will and to corruption by sin and, therefore, to a loss of the light of unchangeable Truth—is a part neither of God nor of the divine nature, but merely a creature and, therefore, far from equality with God.

Chapter 23

What is far more a matter of wonder is that some, who share with us the belief that there is but one principle of all things and that nothing (except the divine nature) can exist apart from creation by God, still refuse to believe, with a good and simple faith, in this good and simple explanation of the creation of the world, namely, that it is the nature of a good God to create good things, and that good things exist

—other than God and inferior to Him—which only a God who was good would have created. They also claim that souls, though not parts but merely creatures of God, have sinned by withdrawing from the Creator and, according to the gravity of their sins, have been imprisoned in bodies ranging, by degrees, from heaven down to earth, and that such souls and bodies constitute the cosmos. Thus, they, too, explain creation by saying that it was not for the sake of producing things that were good but merely for imprisoning things that were sinful.

Origen has been rightly reproved for holding and expressing such views in his work, which he calls *Perì Archōn*, that is, *Of Origins*. I am inexpressibly astonished that a scholar so versed in ecclesiastical literature should have failed to observe, first, that he was contradicting the plain meaning of highly authoritative Scriptural texts. In regard to each of the works of God we are reminded that 'God saw that it was good.' And, when all creation was complete, Scripture concludes: 'God saw that all he had made was very good.'[1] Surely, this can only mean that there was no other reason for creating the world except that good creatures might be made by a good God.

If no one had sinned, this beautiful world could have been filled with created natures that are good. Even now, with sin in the world, it does not follow that all things are sinful. The great majority of those in heaven preserve the integrity of their nature; and not even the sinfulness of a will refusing to preserve the order of its nature can lessen the beauty of God's total order, designed, as it is, according to the laws of His justice. For, as the beauty of a picture is not dimmed by the dark colors, in their proper place, so the beauty of the universe of creatures, if one has insight to discern it, is not marred by sins, even though sin itself is an ugly blotch.

1 Gen. 1.31.

In the second place, Origen and his followers ought to have seen that, if their opinion were true that matter was created that souls might be enclosed in bodies, as in penitentiaries for the punishment of sin, then the higher and lighter bodies should have been for those whose sins were slight and the lower and heavier ones for those whose crimes were great. Hence, logically, demons who are the worst of sinners should have been imprisoned in earthly bodies which are the lowest and heaviest of all, whereas it is men, and even good men, whose bodies are made of earthly matter.

Now, the fact is that it was precisely that we might understand that the merits of souls are not to be measured by the qualities of their bodies that the utterly wicked Devil was given an aerial body, while man—certainly before the fall and, even now, a sinner of far less malice—was given a body of clay.

Most stupid of all is the Origenist idea that what the Creator had in mind, in making a single sun for our single world, was neither to lend to it the luster of beauty nor to provide a source of corporeal well-being, but that He made it because one soul happened to sin in such a way that it had to be imprisoned in just such a body, and, if not one but two or ten or even a hundred souls had happened to sin in the same way at the same time, then the world would have had a hundred suns.

That such was not the case, they explain, was not due to any marvelous provision of the Creator in regard to the health and beauty of corporeal creatures. It just happened the way it did because the extravagance of sin in one single soul called for just such a body. The real extravagance that calls for restraint is not in the souls about which they talk so ignorantly, but in the Origenists themselves who have wandered so far from the truth.

But, to return to the three answers which, as I suggested above,[2] should be given when we are asked concerning any creature—Who made it? How? and Why?—the answers are: 'God'; 'by the Word'; and 'because it is good.' Whether or not we have here, in the mystical sense, an intimation of the Trinity Itself—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—or whether there is some objection to such an interpretation of this passage of Scripture, this is a discussion that would require many words and, surely, I cannot be expected to explain everything in one volume.

Chapter 24

We believe, maintain and faithfully teach that the Father begot the Word, that is, the only-begotten Son who is the Wisdom by which all things were created. He is one as the Father is one, eternal as the Father is eternal, and, equally with the Father, is supremely good. The Holy Spirit is, likewise, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, consubstantial and co-eternal with both. And this whole is a Trinity because of the individuality of the Persons and, yet, a single God because of indivisible divinity and a single Almighty because of indivisible omnipotence. Yet, when we ask concerning each Person individually, the answer must be that each one is God and each is Almighty; and when we inquire concerning the three together, the reply must be that there are not three Gods or three Almighties, but a single God Almighty. Such is the indivisible unity in the Three and such is the way it should be stated.

I am not prepared to offer any premature opinion as to whether or not the Holy Spirit of the good Father and of the

2 Cf above, 11.21.

good Son should be called the goodness of both since He is common to both. However, I would more readily venture to say that He is the holiness of both, not in the sense that this Holy Spirit is an attribute of both but that He is a substance and is the third Person in the Trinity. I find a kind of proof for this view[1] in the fact that, although the Father and the Son are both spirits and are both holy, yet, the third Person, in a special way, is called the Holy Spirit as if He were substantial holiness and consubstantial with the other two.

Notice, however, that if the divine goodness is identical with divine holiness, then it is rational and intelligent rather than rash and presumptuous to pursue the hypothesis that each of God's creatures speaks to us in a kind of mystical code[2] in order to stimulate our curiosity and to intimate an image of the Trinity every time we ask: Who made it? How? and Why? Who? Our mind hears the answer: It was the Father of the Word who said: 'Let it be made'; and what was made when He spoke was made, without doubt, by means of the Word; and the fact that 'God saw that it was good' is sufficient proof that what God created was made solely because of His goodness, not by reason of any necessity nor of any need to use the thing for Himself. In a word, it was made because it was good. And it was called good only after it was made to intimate to our mind that each created being reflected the goodness which was the reason of its being made.

Now, if we are right in understanding this goodness to be the Holy Spirit, then there is an intimation of the whole Trinity in each of God's creations. This same Trinity is also the source, the light, the joy of the Holy City 'which is above'[3] with the holy angels. For, if we ask whence it came, the

1 *Ad hoc enim me probabilius ducit quod . . .*
2 *. . . secreto quodam loquendi modo . . .*
3 Gal. 4.26.

answer is: 'God created it'; whence its wisdom, 'God enlightens it'; whence its happiness, 'God is its joy.' By subsisting in Him it is what it is; by contemplating Him it receives its light; by abiding in Him it possesses beatitude. It is; it knows; it loves. Its life is in the eternity of God; its light is in the truth of God; its joy is in the goodness of God.

Chapter 25

For much the same reason, as far as one can judge, philosophers have sought or, rather, found a kind of trinity of levels in the field of philosophy. Notice that it was not an invention but a discovery that one part should be physics, another logic, and a third ethics, or, as many writers in the Latin tradition would call them, natural, rational and moral philosophy. I dealt with this briefly in Book VIII.[1]

I do not mean to suggest that the philosophers who employed this threefold division had any idea of the Trinity in God. This much is true, however, that the first to discover and recommend this division seems to have been Plato; and it was he who held that God is the sole Author of all being, the Giver of intelligence, and the Inspirer of that love which makes possible a life that is both good and happy.

However much philosophers disagree concerning the nature of things, the method of investigating truth, and the supreme good or end toward which all actions should be referred, they are at one in directing their full attention to the study of these three important, general questions. In spite of the great discrepancy of opinion in regard to each of these issues, there is not one of the philosophers who hesitates to assert that there is some cause of being, some norm in knowing,

1 Cf. above, 8.4-8.

some aim in living. Moreover, there are three requisites if an artist wants to produce something: natural endowment, education, and practice. The criterion of the first is genius; of the second, knowledge; of the third, the thing produced.

I know that we ought to say that a person *enjoys* what he produces, but merely *makes use* of practice. The point of this distinction seems to be that a thing enjoyed is related directly to ourselves and not to something else, whereas a thing used is sought as a means to some other end. Thus we say that the things of time should be used (rather than enjoyed) as a means to our enjoyment of the things of eternity. It is a perversion for people to want to enjoy money, but merely to make use of God. Such people do not spend money for the sake of God, but worship God for the sake of money. However, in actual everyday speech we 'use' what we produce and we 'enjoy' what we use. For, 'what we produce' means, rightly enough, the fruits of the field which, of course, we all make use of in this present life.

It is in this popular sense that I mentioned experience or practice or usage as one of the three requisites to be looked for in a man, namely, natural endowment, education, and experience or use or practice.

When philosophers, as I said, developed the three aspects of philosophy which relate to a happy life, what they had in mind was that natural philosophy might serve natural endowment; rational philosophy, education; and moral philosophy, practice or behavior.

Now, if we were the cause of our own nature, then, indeed, we would be the fathers of our own wisdom and would not need to get an education from our teachers. And if we were the source and the only object of our love, we would be self-sufficient and would need enjoyment of no other good to make us happy. But, in fact, God is the Author of the existence

of our nature and, therefore, He must be our Teacher if we are ever to be wise, and He must be the Source of our inmost consolation if we are ever to be happy.

Chapter 26

We ourselves can recognize in ourselves an image of God, in the sense of an image of the Trinity. Of course, it is merely an image and, in fact, a very remote one. There is no question of identity nor of co-eternity nor, in one word, of consubstantiality with Him. Nevertheless, it is an image which by nature is nearer to God than anything else in all creation, and one that by transforming grace can be perfected into a still closer resemblance.

For, we are, and we know that we are, and we love to be and to know that we are. And in this trinity of being, knowledge, and love there is not a shadow of illusion to disturb us. For, we do not reach these inner realities with our bodily senses as we do external objects, as, for example, color by seeing, sound by hearing, odor by smelling, flavor by tasting, hard or soft objects by touching. In the case of such sensible things, the best we can do is to form very close and immaterial images which help us to turn them over in our minds, to hold them in our memory, and thus to keep our love for them alive. But, without any illusion of image, fancy, or phantasm, I am certain that I am, that I know that I am, and that I love to be and to know.

In the face of these truths, the quibbles of the skeptics lose their force. If they say; 'What if you are mistaken?'—well, if *I* am mistaken, I am. For, if one does not exist, he can by no means be mistaken. Therefore, I am, if I am mistaken.

Because, therefore, I am, if I am mistaken, how can I be mistaken that I am, since it is certain that I am, if I am mistaken? And because, if I could be mistaken, I would have to be the one who is mistaken, therefore, I am most certainly not mistaken in knowing that I am. Nor, as a consequence, am I mistaken in knowing that I know. For, just as I know that I am, I also know that I know. And when I love both to be and to know, then I add to the things I know a third and equally important knowledge, the fact that I love.

Nor am I mistaken that I love, since I am not mistaken concerning the objects of my love. For, even though these objects were false, it would still be true that I loved illusions. For, if this were not true, how could I be reproved and prohibited from loving illusions? But, since these objects are true and certain, who can doubt that, when they are loved, the loving of them is also true and certain? Further, just as there is no one who does not wish to be happy, so there is no one who does not wish to exist. For, how can anyone be happy if he does not exist?

Chapter 27

Merely to exist is, by the very nature of things, so pleasant that in itself it is enough to make even the wretched unwilling to die; for, even when they are conscious of their misery, what they want to put an end to is not themselves but the misery. This is even the case with those who not merely feel miserable but manifestly are so, men who seem fools, in the eyes of the wise, and paupers and beggars to those who consider themselves well off. For, if they had a choice between personal immortality, in which their unhappiness would never

end, or complete and permanent annihilation if they objected to eternal misery, they would be delighted to choose to live forever in misery rather than not to exist at all.

If proof were needed, appeal can be made to the well-known feeling of these men. They are afraid to die, and prefer to live on in misfortune rather than to end it by death. This is proof enough that nature shrinks from annihilation. And even when they know that they must die, they beg for mercy and ask as a boon that death be delayed so that they may live a little longer in their misery. Without a doubt, they prove with what alacrity they would accept immortality—at any rate, one that involved no worse affliction than perpetual indigence.

Why, even irrational animals, with no mind to make such reflections, from the greatest serpents to the tiniest worms, show in every movement they can make that they long to live and escape destruction. Even trees and plants, that can make no conscious movement to avoid destruction, can, in some sense, be said to guard their own existence by guaranteeing sustenance. They attach their roots deep into the earth in order to thrust forth their branches safe into the air. Last of all, even material bodies, lacking sensation and every sign of life, at least rise upwards or sink downwards or remain balanced in between, as though seeking the place where they can best exist in accordance with their nature.

If proof be needed how much human nature loves to know and hates to be mistaken, recall that there is not a man who would not rather be sad but sane than glad but mad. Now, this great and marvelous light of love and hate is peculiar to men alone among all the living animals. For, although some animals have much keener sight in penetrating the light of day, they cannot penetrate that spiritual light which, as it were, illumines our mind and makes us able to judge cor-

rectly of all other things. For the faculty of judgment is in proportion to our capacity for this light.

Nevertheless, although irrational animals do not have knowledge as such in their senses, at least they have something that is like knowledge, whereas purely material things are called sensible, not because they can sense, but only because they can be sensed. Plants have something like sensation only in so far as they take nourishment and reproduce.

While the ultimate explanation of all such material things is a secret of nature, the things themselves openly reveal to our senses their forms which help to make the pattern of this visible world so beautiful. It is as though, in compensation for their own incapacity to know, they wanted to become known by us.

However, although we perceive them by our bodily senses, we do not make judgments concerning them by our senses. For, we men have another and far higher perception which is interior, and by which we distinguish what is just from what is unjust—justice by means of an intellectual conception; what is unjust by the lack of such a form. The function of this sense is not aided by a keen eye, nor by ear, nose or palate, nor by any bodily touch. By it I am certain of my existence and of the knowledge of my existence. Moreover, I love these two and, in like manner, am certain that I love them.

Chapter 28

The plan of my book does not call for further consideration of the measure of our love for our existence and knowledge, nor of the analogy to this love which can be found even on the lower levels of creation. However, nothing has been

said to make clear whether the love by which our existence and the knowledge of it are loved is itself the object of love. The answer is yes; and the proof is this, that what is really loved, in men who deserve to be loved, is love itself. For, we do not call a man good because he knows what is good, but because he loves it. Why, then, do we not see that what we love in ourselves is the very love by which we love whatever is good?

There is also a love by which we love what should not be loved. And a man hates this love in himself if he loves the love of whatever is good. Both loves can exist in one and the same person. This co-existence is good for a man in that he can, by increasing in himself the love of what is right, decrease his love of what is evil until his whole life has been transformed to good and brought to perfection.

For, if we were beasts, we would love the carnal life of the senses which would be our sufficient good and, therefore, as soon as all was well with us, we would seek for nothing further. Likewise, if we were trees, we could not love by any conscious tendency; nevertheless, there would be a kind of striving for whatever would make us more abundant in our fruitfulness. Again, if we were stones or waves, winds or flames, or anything of this sort which is without sensation and life, we would nevertheless be endowed with a kind of attraction for our proper place in the order of nature. The specific gravity of a body is, as it were, its love, whether it tends upward by its lightness or downward by its weight. For, a body is borne by gravity as a spirit by love, whichever way it is moved.

It is, therefore, because we are men, created to the image of a Creator, whose eternity is true, His truth eternal, His love both eternal and true, a Creator who is the eternal, true, and lovable Trinity in whom there is neither confusion

nor division, that, wherever we turn among the things which He created and conserved so wonderfully, we discover His footprints, whether lightly or plainly impressed. For, not one of all these things which are below us would either be, or belong to a particular species, or follow and observe any order, unless it has been created by Him whose existence, wisdom, and goodness are all transcendent.

When, therefore, we contemplate His image in our very selves, let us, like the younger son in the Gospel,[1] return to ourselves, rise and seek Him from whom we have departed by sin. In Him our existence will know no death, our knowledge embrace no error, our love meet no resistance. At present we are certain that we possess these three things, not by the testimony of others but by our own consciousness of their presence in our interior and unerring vision. Nevertheless, since we cannot know of ourselves how long they will last or whether they will never cease[2] and what will result from our good or bad use of them, we seek for other witnesses if we have not already found them. Not now, but later,[3] I shall carefully discuss the reasons why we should have unhesitating trust in these witnesses.

But in this Book, God helping, I shall continue to discuss, to the best of my ability, the City of God, not as it is in the pilgrimage of this mortal life but as it is in the eternity of heaven. There it consists of the holy and faithful angels who never were nor ever will be deserters from God, and who, as I have already said, were separated by God, in the very beginning, from those who rejected the eternal light and were turned into darkness.

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1 Luke 15.17,18.
2 . . . *quamdiu futura vel utrum numquam defutura* . . .
3 Cf. below, 22.22.

Chapter 29

The holy angels gain a knowledge of God not by the spoken word but by the presence in their souls of that immutable Truth which is the only-begotten Word of God. They know this Word and the Father and their Holy Spirit, understanding that this Trinity is indivisible and that each of the Persons is substantial, although there are not three Gods but only one. They comprehend all this in such a way that it is better known to them than we are known to ourselves.

They also know every creature not merely in itself but, still better, in the wisdom of God, in the very art by which it was created. And, therefore, they know themselves better in God than as they are in themselves, although, of course, they have this knowledge, too. For, these angels were created and are something different from the One who created them. Therefore, in the sense I have explained above,[1] the knowledge which they have in Him is as clear as daylight, whereas what they have in themselves is like the twilight.

For, there is a great difference between knowing something in the very idea according to which it was made and knowing it as it is in itself. For example, it is one thing to understand the straightness of a line or the correctness of a figure when seen by the intellect and another when traced in the sand. So, too, to know justice in the light of immutable Truth is different from knowing justice in the soul of a just man.

It is the same with all other things—as the firmament of the heavens between the waters above and those below; the gathering of the waters below, the appearance of the dry land, and the production of plants and trees; the creation of sun, moon, and stars; of land animals, of fowl, fish, and of

1 Cf. above, 11.7.

sea monsters; of all creatures that walk and crawl upon the earth; and of man himself who was to excel all that is upon the earth. All these are known by the angels in one way as the things are in the Word of God, where the angels see the unchangeable and eternal purposes and the ideas according to which all these things were created, and, in another way, as these things are in themselves. In the one case, the knowledge has the clarity of the Artist's thought; in the other, it has the shadows of the thing produced. But, when these creations are referred to the praise and adoration of the Creator Himself, it is as if the morning dawned in the minds of those who were contemplating them.

Chapter 30

It is recorded that all God's works were completed in six days (the day being repeated six times), because six is a perfect number. Of course, no prolongation of time was necessary for God. He could have at once created all things and then let them measure time by their appropriate movements. It is the perfection of God's work that is signified by the number six. For, this is the first number made up of aliquot parts, a sixth, a third and a half, respectively, one, two and three, totaling six. In this way of dealing with numbers, aliquot parts are those which exactly divide the number, that is, fractions like a half, a third, a fourth, and so on that have a whole number as denominator. For example, four is a part of the number nine, but it cannot, for that reason, be called an aliquot part, whereas one is, since it is the ninth; and three is a third. However, these last two parts—the ninth and third, that is, one and three—when added, are far from making the total nine.

In the same way, four is a part of ten, but no fraction indicates which part, whereas one is an aliquot part because it is one tenth. Ten has also a fifth part which is two and a half which is five. But these three parts—the tenth, fifth and half, that is, one, two and five—do not total ten but to eight. Again, the aliquot parts of twelve add up to more than twelve: one twelfth of it is one; one sixth, two; one fourth, three; one third, four; one half, six; but one, two, three, four, and six make more than twelve, namely, sixteen.

I considered it necessary to mention these few examples in order to illustrate the perfection of the number six. As I have said, it is the first that is exactly made up of its aliquot parts added together. And six is the number of days in which God completed His works. Thus we see that we should not underestimate the significance of numbers, since, in many passages of Sacred Scripture, numbers have a meaning for the conscientious interpreter. Not without reason has it been said in to praise of God: 'Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight.'[1]

Chapter 31

However, on the seventh day, which is the same day repeated for the seventh time—seven is a perfect number but for a different reason—we have mention of the rest of God and the first indication of its santification.[1] Thus, God did not wish to sanctify this day by any of His works but, rather, by His rest. This rest has no evening in the sense that, not having been created, it need not be known as the day, when

1 Wisd. 11.20.

1 Gen. 2.3.

it is known in the Word of God, and known differently, as the evening, when it is known in itself. There is much more to be said about the perfection of the number seven, but this book is already long enough; besides, it might look as though I wanted to seize an opportunity merely to flaunt my little learning rather than to use it profitably. For, I suppose I may be accused of failing in measure and gravity if I talk too much about 'number' to the neglect of 'measure' and 'weight.'[2]

Let it suffice to remark that three is the first odd integer; four, the first even integer; seven, the sum of these two. For this reason, it is frequently used to suggest an unlimited number. Thus, the text, 'For a just man shall fall seven times and shall rise again,'[3] means that he will not perish, however often he falls. There is here no question of falling into sins, but of afflictions leading to lowliness. Again we read: 'Seven times a day I have given praise to Thee';[4] and, in another place, the identical idea differently expressed: 'His praise shall be always in my mouth.'[5] Holy Scripture offers us many such examples in which the number seven, as I have said, is ordinarily used to convey some kind of wholeness or universality.

So, too, the number seven often signifies the Holy Spirit, of whom our Lord said: 'He will teach you all the truth.'[6] For, in that Spirit is God's rest in the sense of our rest in God,[7] rest in the Whole, in full perfection—for, where there is only a part, there must be toil. That is why we must work so long as we know only in part, but, 'when that which is perfect has

2 Note the play on words: *ratio moderationis adque gravitatis . . . mensuram et pondus neglegere . . .*
3 Prov. 24.16.
4 Ps. 118.164.
5 Ps. 33.1.
6 John 16.13.
7 Cf. above, 11.8.

come, that which is imperfect will be done away with.'[8] That is why there is so much toil in the interpretation of these passages of Scripture.

But the holy angels, whose society and companionship we long for throughout our wearisome pilgrimage, now have eternity in being, facility in knowing, and felicity in rest. Without any difficulty, they can assist us because their spiritual activities, being pure and free, involve no labor.

Chapter 32

I hope that no one will object and urge that the text, 'Let there be light, and there was light,'[1] has no reference to the angels, because he thinks or teaches that the kind of light that was the first created was material, and that the angels had been brought into existence not merely before the firmament called heaven which divided the waters but even before the time designated by the text, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth';[2] and that the phrase, 'In the beginning,' does not suggest that nothing had been made previously, since the angels had already been created, but rather that God made all things by His Wisdom, by His Word, and that Scripture calls the Word 'The Beginning.' In the Gospel when, replying to the Jews who had asked Him who He was, He said that He was the Beginning.[3]

How can I object to such an objection? On the contrary, I am delighted that the objection implies that the Trinity is mentioned in the very beginning of the holy Book of Genesis. For, if the text, 'In the beginning God created the heavens

8 1 Cor. 13.10.

1 Gen. 1.3.
2 Gen. 1.1.
3 Cf. John 8.25.

and the earth,' means that is was by the Son that the Father created all things, as the Psalmist testifies in the words, 'How great are thy works, O Lord? Thou hast made all things in wisdom,'[4] then, in a verse or so later, it is easy to find a mention of the Holy Spirit.

For, after the next sentence, 'The earth was waste and void; darkness covered the abyss,'[5] had described what kind of earth God first created, or what mass of material for the future construction of the world could be called heaven and earth, then, in order that the implication of the Trinity might be complete, Scripture declares: 'And the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.'

Let each of us interpret this passage as best he can, for the meaning is so profound that it may provoke in many puzzled minds quite different interpretations, none of them contrary to the rule of faith,[6] so long as no one doubts that the holy angels in their heavenly dwelling, although not co-eternal with God, are sure and certain of their true and everlasting happiness.

Our Lord, who teaches that His little ones belong to the society of the angels, not only says that 'they shall be as angels of God,'[7] but He also reveals the kind of contemplation these angels enjoy when He says: 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven.'[8]

4 Ps. 103.24.
5 Gen. 1.2.
6 For a similar expression of exegetical pluralism, cf. above, 11.19.
7 Matt. 22.31.
8 Matt. 18.10.

Chapter 33

The Apostle Peter clearly teaches that certain angels, having sinned, were hurled down to the lowest depths of the universe, as to a prison dungeon, there to remain until their final damnation on the day of judgment. His words are: 'God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but thrust them into the dark prisons of hell and delivered them to be tortured and kept in custody for judgment.'[1] No one, then, can doubt that God, either in foreknowledge or in act, separated the sinful angels from the others. And, as for these others, no reader will dispute that they are rightly called 'light.' For, even we, who are still living by faith in this world, still hoping to be 'as the angels,' though we are not yet like them, are called 'light' by the Apostle: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.'[2] And, as for the deserter-angels, those who hold, whether by reason or by Revelation, that they are worse than human traitors, remark how suitably they are called 'darkness,' even though quite a different kind of light and darkness is signified in the following passages of Genesis: 'God said, "Let there be light," and there was light,'[3] and 'God separated the light from the darkness.'

At any rate, for us there are two societies of angels, one in the enjoyment of God, the other swelling with pride. The Psalmist refers to one in the verse: 'Praise ye him, all his angels,'[4] and the Gospel records the speech of the prince of the other: 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall

1 Cf. 2 Peter 2.4. Note that the *rudentibus,* 'by ropes,' of the Vulgate appears as *retrudens* in Augustine's Biblical text and as *detrudens* in his own.
2 Eph. 5.8.
3 Gen. 1.3,4.
4 Ps. 148.2.

down and worship me.'[5] One is aflame with the holy love of God; the other is reeking with the impure desire for its own exaltation. Since, as Scripture warns us, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble,'[6] one group dwells in the highest courts of heaven; the other, hurled down, rages in the lowest regions of the air. One is tranquil with radiant holiness; the other is troubled with dark desires. One, by the will of God, aids us with kindness and avenges us with justice; the other, in arrogance, seethes with the desire of dominating and doing us damage. One group, as ministers of God's goodness, are free to do all the good they desire; the others are bridled by the power of God to keep them from doing all the harm they would. The good angels laugh at the others when these unwillingly do more good than harm by their persecutions; the latter envy the former when they bring their pilgrims home.

For us, then, these two angelic societies are dissimilar and opposed one to the other. One is good by nature and upright in will; the other is also good by nature, but perverse by choice. The difference between the two societies is much more explicitly expressed in other Scriptural texts, but even in the Book of Genesis these angels, I think are intimated by the terms light and darkness, even though the author may have had something else in mind when he wrote these words.

My only hope is that our discussion of this obscure passage has not been a waste of time. At any rate, even though we have failed to discover the intention of the author of Genesis, we have not abandoned the rule of faith which, from other Scriptural passages of equal authority, is sufficiently well known to the faithful.

Even though this text of Genesis does indicate the material

5 Matt. 4.9,10.
6 James 4.6; 1 Peter 5.5.

works of God, these, certainly, suggest certain spiritual analogies, as is clear from what the Apostle had in mind when he wrote: 'For you are all children of the light and children of the day. We are not of night, nor of darkness.'[7] And if the author of Genesis himself had this in mind, then we have reached a very satisfactory conclusion to our discussion, namely, that this man of God, who was so eminent in divine wisdom, or, rather, the Spirit of God, who inspired him, so recorded the works of creation completed on the sixth day that he by no means failed to mention the angels. We may believe that he included them in the words, 'in the beginning,' in the sense that God made them first, or, as seems more likely, in the sense that God created them in the only-begotten Word.

Scripture says: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' By these two words, heaven and earth, all of creation is signified. They may mean spiritual and material creation, as seems very probable, or they may refer to the two major elements of the world which contain all that has been created. In this case, the writer spoke first on creation as a whole and then described it part by part according to the mystical number of days.

Chapter 34

Some people have had the idea that angelic choirs are somehow symbolized under the name of waters and that this is the meaning of the words, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters to divide the waters.'[1] They think that waters 'above' the firmament mean the angels and those

7 1 Thess. 5.5.

1 Gen. 1.6,7.

'below' mean either the waters we can see, or the host of evil angels, or the races of mankind. If this interpretation be true, then it is not clear from this text when the angels were created, but when they were separated. However, other people are perverse and heretical enough to deny that any waters at all were created by God, alleging that it is nowhere written: 'God said, Let there be waters.'

The fact is, of course, that they might, with equal folly, say the same about the earth, for nowhere do we read: 'God said, Let there be earth.' To which they retort with the text: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Very well; but here water also is implied, both being included in the one word, as can be seen from the words of the psalm: 'The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.'[2]

As for those who claim that 'waters above the heavens' means angels, their worry is the weight of water. They do not see how anything so fluid and heavy could have been placed in the upper reaches of the cosmos. By the same logic, if they could create a man, they would not place in this head any of that pituitary secretion which the Greeks call *phlegma* and which plays the role of water in the composition of our bodies. However, according to God's plan, it is the head which was found to be the most suitable place for this *phlegma*. Now, according to the hypothesis of our opponents, this seems so absurd that, if the fact were unknown and Scripture said that God had placed a moist and cold and, therefore, heavy humor in the very highest part of the human body, these assayers of the cosmic elements[3] would refuse to believe it, or, if they accepted Scriptural authority, they would find some quite different meaning for the words.

2 Ps. 94.5.
3 . . . *isti trutinatores elementorum* . . .

But, now, to go on scrutinizing and discussing every detail concerning the creation of the world which Scripture has recorded would take too much space and would take me too far from the purpose of the present work. What I have already said of the two different and opposed societies of angels seems to me enough to reveal the origins of the two Cities which are in conflict in human history and which are to be the theme of the rest of this work. So, at long last, let this be the end of the present Book.

BOOK TWELVE

Chapter 1

IN THE PREVIOUS BOOK[1] we saw something of the beginning of the two cities, so far as angels are concerned. In the same way, we must now proceed to the creation of men and see the beginning of the cities so far as it concerns the kind of rational creatures who are mortal. First, however, a few remarks about the angels must be made in order to make it as clear as I can how there is no real difficulty or impropriety in speaking of a single society composed of both men and angels; and why, therefore, it is right to say that there are not four cities or societies, namely, two of angels and two of men, but only two, one of them made up of the good—both angels and men—and the other of those who are evil.

There is no reason to doubt that the contrary dispositions which have developed among these good and bad angels are due, not to different natures and origins, for God the Author and Creator of all substances has created them both, but to the dissimilar choices and desires of these angels themselves. Some, remaining faithful to God, the common good of all, have lived in the enjoyment of His eternity, truth, and love, while others, preferring the enjoyment of their own power, as though they were their own good, departed from the higher good and common blessedness for all and turned to goods of their own choosing.

1 Cf. above, 11.33,34.

Preferring the pomp of pride to this sublimity of eternity, the craftiness of vanity to the certainty of truth, and the turmoil of dissension to the union of love, they became proud, deceitful, and envious.

Since the happiness of all angels consists in union with God, it follows that their unhappiness must be found in the very contrary, that is, in not adhering to God. To the question: 'Why are the good angels happy?' the right answer is: 'Because they adhere to God.' To the question: 'Why are the others unhappy?' the answer is: 'Because they do not adhere to God.' In fact, there is no other good which can make any rational or intellectual creature happy except God. Not every creature has the potentialities for happiness. Beasts, trees, stones, and such things neither acquire nor have the capacity for this gift. However, every creature which has this capacity receives it, not from itself, since it has been created out of nothing, but from its Creator. To possess Him is to be happy; to lose Him is to be in misery. And, of course, that One whose beatitude depends upon Himself as His own good and not on any other good can never be unhappy since He can never lose Himself.

Thus, there can be no unchangeable good except our one, true, and blessed God. All things which He has made are good because made by Him, but they are subject to change because they were made, not out of Him, but out of nothing. Although they are not supremely good, since God is a greater good than they, these mutable things are, none the less, highly good by reason of their capacity for union with and, therefore, beatitude in the Immutable Good which is so completely their good that, without this good, misery is inevitable.

But it does not follow that other creatures in the universe are better off merely because they are incapable of misery.

That would be like saying that other members of the body are better than the eyes because they can never become blind. A sentient nature even in pain is better than a stone that cannot suffer. In the same way, a rational nature even in misery is higher than one which, because it lacks reason or sensation, cannot suffer misery.

This being the case, it is nothing less than a perversion of the nature of the angels if they do not adhere to God. For, remember, their nature is so high in the order of creation that, mutable as it is, it can attain beatitude by adhering to the immutable and supreme Good, which is God, and that, unless it achieves beatitude, this nature fails to satisfy its inmost exigencies, and, finally, that nothing but God can satisfy these needs of the angelic nature.

Now, this perversion, like every imperfection in a nature, harms nature and, therefore, is contrary to the nature. It follows, therefore, that what makes the wicked angels differ from the good ones is not their nature but a perversion or imperfection; and this very blemish is a proof of how highly to be esteemed is the nature itself. Certainly, no blemish in a thing ought to be blamed unless we are praising the thing as a whole, for the whole point of blaming the blemish is that it mars the perfection of something we would like to see praised.

For example, when we say that blindness is a defect of the eyes, we imply that it is the very nature of the eyes to see, and when we say that deafness is a malady of the ears, we are supposing that it is their nature to hear. So, too, when we say that it is a failure in an angel not to attain union with God, we openly proclaim that they were meant by nature to be one with God.

Of course, no one can fully comprehend or properly express the ineffable union of being one with God in His life,

in His wisdom, in His joy, and all this without a shadow of death or darkness or disturbance. One thing is certain. The very failure of the bad angels to cling to God—a desertion that damaged their nature like a disease—is itself proof enough that the nature God gave them was good—so good that not to be one with God was for them a disaster.

Chapter 2

This explanation just given seemed to me necessary to forestall the objection that the apostate spirits might have received from some principle other than God a nature different from that of the other angels. The malice of this mistake can be more easily and speedily removed the more clearly one grasps what God meant by the words, 'I AM WHO AM,'[1] spoken through the medium of an angel at the time when Moses was being sent to the children of Israel.

Since God is supreme being, that is, since He supremely *is* and, therefore, is immutable, it follows that He gave 'being' to all that He created out of nothing; not, however, absolute being. To some things He gave more of being and to others less and, in this way, arranged an order of natures in a hierarchy of being. (This noun, 'being,' is derived from the verb 'to be' just as 'wisdom' from the verb 'to be wise.' In Latin, *essentia,* being, is a new word, not used by the ancient writers, recently adopted in order to find an equivalent of the Greek, *ousía,* of which *essentia* is the exact translation.)

Consequently, no nature—except a non-existent one—can be contrary to the nature which is supreme and which created whatever other natures have being. In other words, nonentity stands in opposition to that which is. Therefore, there

1 Exod. 3.14.

is no being opposed to God who is the Supreme Being and Source of all beings without exception.

Chapter 3

In Scripture, those who oppose God's rule, not by nature but by sin, are called His enemies. They can do no damage to Him, but only to themselves; their enmity is not a power to harm, but merely a velleity to oppose Him. In any case, God is immutable and completely invulnerable. Hence, the malice by which His so-called enemies oppose God is not a menace to Him, but merely bad for themselves—an evil because what is good in their nature is wounded. It is not their nature, but the wound in their nature, that is opposed to God—as evil is opposed to good.

No one will deny that God is supremely good. Thus, any lack of goodness is opposed to God as evil is opposed to good. At the same time, the nature itself is not less good because the lack of goodness is evil and, therefore, the evil of lacking some goodness is opposed to this good, which is the goodness of the nature. Note that in respect to God the contrast is merely that of evil to good, but in respect to the nature which suffers a lack of something good, the lack is not only evil but also harmful. No evils, of course, can be harmful to God, but only to mutable and corruptible natures—and, even then, the harm done bears witness to the goodness of the natures which suffer, for, unless they were good, they could not suffer the wounds of a lack of goodness.

Just consider the harm done by these wounds—the loss of integrity, of beauty, of health, of virtue, or of any other natural good which can be lost or lessened by sin or sickness. If a nature has nothing of goodness to lose, then there is no

harm done by lacking this nothing and, consequently, there is nothing wrong. For, there is no such thing as something wrong that does no harm.[1]

The conclusion is that, although no defect can damage an unchangeable good, no nature can be damaged by a defect unless that nature itself is good—for the simple reason that a defect exists only where harm is done. To put the matter in another way: a defect can never be found in the highest good, nor ever apart from some kind of good.[2]

Thus, good things without defects can sometimes be found; absolutely bad things, never—for even those natures that were vitiated at the outset by an evil will are only evil in so far as they are defective, while they are good in so far as they are natural. And when a vitiated nature is being punished, in addition to the good of being what it is, it is a good for it not to go unpunished, since this is just and whatever is just is certainly good. No one is punished for natural defects, but only for deliberate faults. And even for a vice to develop, by force of habit and overindulgence, into a strong natural defect, the vice must have begun in the will. But here, of course, I am speaking of the vices of that nature which has a mind illumined by an immaterial light in virtue of which it can distinguish what is just from what is unjust.

Chapter 4

Of course, in the case of beasts, trees, and other mutable and mortal creatures which lack not merely an intellect, but even sensation or life itself, it would be ridiculous to condemn in them the defects which destroy their corruptible nature.

1 *Nam esse vitium et non nocere non potest.*
2 . . . *vitium esse nec in summo posse bono nec nisi in aliquo bono.*

For, it was by the will of the Creator that they received that measure of being whereby their comings and goings and fleeting existences should contribute to that special, if lowly, loveliness of our earthly seasons which chimes with the harmony of the universe. For, there was never any need for the things of earth either to rival those of heaven or to remain uncreated merely because the latter are better.

It is, in fact, the very law of transitory things that, here on earth where such things are at home, some should be born while others die, the weak should give way to the strong and the victims should nourish the life of the victors. If the beauty of this order fails to delight us, it is because we ourselves, by reason of our mortality, are so enmeshed in this corner of the cosmos that we fail to perceive the beauty of a total pattern in which the particular parts, which seem ugly to us, blend in so harmonious and beautiful a way. That is why, in those situations where it is beyond our power to understand the providence of God, we are rightly commanded to make an act of faith rather than allow the rashness of human vanity to criticize even a minute detail in the masterpiece of our Creator.

Although these defects in the things of earth are involuntary and unpunishable, yet, like voluntary ones, when properly contemplated, they reveal the excellence in the natures themselves, all of which have God for their Author and Creator. For, in both cases, what we dislike is the lack by defect of something which we like in the nature as a whole. Sometimes, of course, natures themselves are displeasing to men because they happen to be harmful. It is a case of regarding only their utility, not the things themselves, as with the plague of frogs and flies which scourged the pride of the Egyptians.[1] But, with such reasoning, fault could be found even with the

1 Exod. 8.

sun, since criminals and debtors have sometimes been judicially condemned to solar exposure. It is not by our comfort or inconvenience, but by the nature considered in itself, that glory is given to its Creator. So, even the nature of unquenchable fire is, without doubt, worthy of praise, although it is to serve as a punishment for the damned. Is there anything, in fact, more beautiful than a leaping, luminous flame of fire? Or anything more useful, when it warms us, heals us, cooks our food? Yet, nothing is more painful when it burns us. Thus, the same thing applied in one way is harmful, but when properly used is extremely beneficial. It is all but impossible to enumerate all the good uses to which fire is put throughout the world.

We should pay no attention to those who praise fire for its light but condemn its heat—on the principle that a thing should be judged not by its nature, but by our comfort or inconvenience. They like to see it, but hate to be burnt. What they forget is that the same light which they like is injurious and unsuitable for weak eyes, and that the heat which they hate is, for some animals, the proper condition for a healthy life.

Chapter 5

All natures, then, are good simply because they exist and, therefore, have each its own measure of being, its own beauty, even, in a way, its own peace.[1] And when each is in the place assigned by the order of nature, it best preserves the full measure of being that was given to it. Beings not made for eternal life, changing for better or for worse according as they promote the good and improvement of things to which,

1 Cf. Vol. 3, 19.12, for the meaning of 'peace.'

by the law of the Creator, they serve as means, follow the direction of Divine Providence and tend toward the particular end which forms a part of the general plan for governing the universe. This means that the dissolution which brings mutable and mortal things to their death is not so much a process of annihilation as a progress toward something they were designed to become.

The conclusion from all this is that God is never to be blamed for any defects that offend us, but should ever be praised for all the perfection we see in the natures He has made. For God is Absolute Being and, therefore, all other being that is relative was made by Him. No being that was made from nothing could be on a par with God, nor could it even be at all, were it not made by Him.

Chapter 6

It follows that the true cause of the good angels' beatitude lies in their union with Absolute Being. And if we seek the cause of the bad angels' misery, we are right in finding it in this, that they abandoned Him whose Being is absolute and turned to themselves whose being is relative—a sin that can have no better name than pride. 'For pride is the beginning of all sin.'[1] They refused to reserve their strength for Him.[2] They might have had more of being if they had adhered to Him whose Being is supreme, but, by preferring themselves to Him, they preferred what was less in the order of being.

Such was the first defect, the first lack, the first perversion of that nature which, being created, could not be absolute, and yet, being created for beatitude, might have rejoiced in

1 Eccli. 10.15.
2 Cf. Ps. 58.10.

Him who is Absolute Being; but which, having turned from Him, was doomed, not to be nothing but to have so much less of being that it was bound to be wretched.

If one seeks for the efficient cause of their evil will, none is to be found. For, what can make the will bad when it is the will itself which makes an action bad? Thus, an evil will is the efficient cause of a bad action, but there is no efficient cause of an evil will. If there is such a cause, it either has or has not a will. If it has, then that will is either good or bad. If good, one would have to be foolish enough to conclude that a good will makes a bad will. In that case, a good will becomes the cause of sin—which is utterly absurd. On the other hand, if the hypothetical cause of a bad will has itself a bad will, I would have to ask what made this will bad, and, to put an end to the inquiry: What made the first bad will bad? Now, the fact is that there was no first bad will that was made bad by any other bad will—it was made bad by itself. For, if it were preceded by a cause that made it evil, that cause came first. But, if I am told that nothing made the will evil but that it always was so, then I ask whether or not it existed in some nature.

If this evil will existed in no nature, then it did not exist at all. If it existed in some nature, then it vitiated, corrupted, injured that nature and, therefore, deprived it of some good. An evil will could not exist in an evil nature but only in a good one, mutable enough to suffer harm from this deprivation. For, if no harm were done, then there was no deprivation and, consequently, no right to call the will evil. But, if harm was done, it was done by destroying or diminishing what was good. Thus, an evil will could not have existed from all eternity in a nature in which a previously existing good had to be eliminated before the evil will could harm the

nature. But, if it did not exist from all eternity, who, then, caused this evil will?

The only remaining suggestion is that the cause of the evil will was something which had no will. My next question is whether this 'something' was superior, inferior, or equal to the will. If superior, then it was better. So, then, how can it have had no will and not rather a good will? If equal, the case is the same: for, as long as two wills are equally good, one cannot produce an evil will in the other. The supposition remains, then, that it was an inferior thing without a will which produced the evil will of the angelic nature which first sinned.

But that thing itself, whatever it was, even though it was low to the lowest point of earthliness, was, without doubt good since it was a nature and a being having its own character and species in its own genus and order. How, then, can a good thing be the efficient cause of an evil will? How, I ask, can good be the cause of evil? For, when the will, abandoning what is above it, turns itself to something lower, it becomes evil because the very turning itself and not the thing to which it turns is evil. Therefore, an inferior being does not make the will evil but the will itself, because it is a created will, wickedly and inordinately seeks the inferior being.

Take the case of two men whose physical and mental make-up is exactly the same. They are both attracted by the exterior beauty of the same person. While gazing at this loveliness, the will of one man is moved with an illicit desire; the will of the other remains firm in its purity. Why did the will become evil in one case and not in the other? What produced the evil will in the man in whom it began to be evil? The physical beauty of the person could not have been the cause, since that was seen by both in exactly the

same way and yet both wills did not become evil. Was the cause the flesh of one of those who looked? Then why not the flesh of the other, also? Or was the cause the mind of one of them? Again, why not the mind of both? For the supposition is that both are equally constituted in mind and body. Must we say, then, that one was tempted by a secret suggestion of the Devil, as if it were not rather by his own will that he consented to this suggestion or enticement or whatever it was?

If so, then what was it in him that was the cause of his consent, of the evil will to follow the evil suggestion? To settle this difficulty, let us suppose that the two men are tempted equally, that one yields and consents to the temptation, that the other remains as he was before. The obvious conclusion is that one was unwilling, the other willing, to fail in chastity. And what else could be the cause of their attitudes but their own wills, since both men have the same constitution and temperament? The beauty which attracted the eyes of both was the same; the secret suggestion by which both were tempted was the same. However carefully they examine the situation, eager to learn what is was that made one of the two evil, no cause is apparent.

For, suppose we say that the man himself made his will evil. Very well, but what was the man himself before he made his will evil? He was a good nature, created by God, the immutable God.

Take a person who says that the one who consents to the temptation and enticement made his own will evil although previously he had been entirely good. Recall the facts. The one consents, while the other does not, to a sinful desire concerning a beautiful person; the beauty was seen by both equally, and before the temptation both men were absolutely alike in mind and body. Now, the person who talks of a man

making his own will evil must ask why the man made his will evil, whether because he is a nature or because he is nature made out of nothing? He will learn that the evil arises not from the fact that the man is a nature, but from the fact that the nature was made out of nothing.

For, if a nature is the cause of an evil will, then we are compelled to say that evil springs from good and that good is the cause of evil—since a bad will comes from a good nature. But how can it come about that a good, though mutable, nature, even before its will is evil, can produce something evil, namely, this evil will itself?

Chapter 7

No one, therefore, need seek for an efficient cause of an evil will. Since the 'effect' is, in fact, a deficiency, the cause should be called 'deficient.' The fault of an evil will begins when one falls from Supreme Being to some being which is less than absolute.[1] Trying to discover causes of such deficiencies —causes which, as I have said, are not efficient but deficient —is like trying to see darkness or hear silence. True, we have some knowledge of both darkness and silence: of the former only by the eyes; of the latter only by the ears. Nevertheless, we have no sensation but only the privation of sensation.

So there is no point in anyone trying to learn from me what I know I do not know—unless, perhaps, he wants to know how not to know what, as he ought to know, no one can know.[2] For, things we know, not by sensation, but by the absence of sensation, are known—if the word says or means

1 Deficere *namque ab eo, quod summe est, ad id, quod minus est, hoc est* incipere *habere voluntatem malam.*

2 . . . *nisi forte ut nescire discat, quod sciri non posse sciendum est.*

anything—by some kind of 'unknowing,' so that they are both known and not known at the same time.[3] For example, when the vision of the eye passes from sensation to sensation, it sees darkness only when it begins not to see. So, too, no other sense but the ear can perceive silence, yet silence can only be heard by not being heard.

So, too, it is only the vision of the mind that discerns the *species intellegibilis* when it understands intelligible realities. But, when the realities are no longer intelligible, the mind, too, knows by 'unknowing.' For 'who can understand sins?'[4]

Chapter 8

This I know, that the nature of God can never and nowhere be deficient in anything, while things made out of nothing can be deficient. In regard to these latter, the more they have of being and the more good things they do or make —for then they are doing or making something positive— the more their causes are efficient; but in so far as they fail or are defective and, in that sense, 'do evil'—if a 'defect' can be 'done'—then their causes are 'deficient.' I know, further, that when a will 'is made' evil, what happens would not have happened if the will had not wanted it to happen. That is why the punishment which follows is just, since the defection was not necessary but voluntary. The will does not fall 'into sin'; it falls 'sinfully.'[1] Defects are not mere relations to natures that are evil; they are evil in themselves because, con-

3 . . . *si dici aut intellegi potest quodam modo nesciendo sciuntur, ut sciendo nesciantur.*
4 Ps. 18.13.

1 *Deficitur enim non ad mala, sed male.*

trary to the order of natures, there is a defection from Being that is supreme to some lesser being.

Thus, greed is not a defect in the gold that is desired but in the man who loves it perversely by falling from justice which he ought to esteem as incomparably superior to gold; nor is lust a defect in bodies which are beautiful and pleasing: it is a sin in the soul of the one who loves corporal pleasures perversely, that is, by abandoning that temperance which joins us in spiritual and unblemishable union with realities far more beautiful and pleasing; nor is boastfulness a blemish in words of praise: it is a failing in the soul of one who is so perversely in love with other peoples' applause that he despises the voice of his own conscience; nor is pride a vice in the one who delegates power, still less a flaw in the power itself: it is a passion in the soul of the one who loves his own power so perversely as to condemn the authority of one who is still more powerful.

In a word, anyone who loves perversely the good of any nature whatsoever and even, perhaps, acquires this good makes himself bad by gaining something good and sad by losing something better.[2]

Chapter 9

There is, then, no natural efficient cause of an evil will or, if I may use the word, no essential cause. The reason for this is that it is the evil will itself that starts that evil in mutable spirits, which is nothing but a weakening and worsening of the good in their nature. What 'makes' the will evil is, in reality, an 'unmaking,' a desertion from God. The very de-

2 . . . *ipse fit in bono malus et miser meliore privatus.*

fection is deficient—in the sense of having no cause. However, in saying that there is no efficient cause even of a good will, we must beware of believing that the good will of the good angels was uncreated and co-eternal with God. But, if good angels were created, how can we say that their good will was not created? The fact is, it was created; the only question is whether is was created simultaneously with the creation of the angels or whether they first existed without a good will. If simultaneously, then, undoubtedly, it was created by Him who created the angels, so that, as soon as they were created, they adhered to Him who created them by means of that love with which they were created. Thus, the reason why the bad were separated from the society of good angels was that the good persevered in the same good will, whereas the others changed themselves into bad angels by defection from good will. The only thing that 'made' their will bad was that they fell away from a will which was good. Nor would they have fallen away, had they not chosen to fall away.

In the hypothesis, however, that the good angels, existing at first without a good will, produced it in themselves without the help of God, they must have made themselves better than what they were when God created them. This is nonsense. For, without a good will, what could they be but evil? Or, if we may not say evil, since their will was not yet evil—for they could hardly fall away from what they had not yet begun to have—at least, they certainly were not good angels—not as good as they were to become when they came to possess a good will.

So much for the hypothesis. Since they could not make themselves better than God made them—for no one can make anything better than God can—then it follows that, without the co-operation of their Creator, they could never have come into possession of that good will which made them better.

Now, it is true that their good will was not only the cause of their turning and adhering to Him, who is Perfect Being, rather than to themselves, whose being was less than perfect, but also the reason why they had more of being than before and could live wisely and happily in union with God. Nevertheless, this merely shows that any will, however good, would have been destitute and destined to remain in hopeless desire, did not He who had created their good nature out of nothing, and had given it a capacity for union with Himself, first awaken in the will a greater longing for this union and then fill the will with some of His very Being in order to make it better.[1]

This raises another issue. For, if the good angels did something themselves to bring about their good will, did they do this with or without a will? If without, then, of course, they were not the agents. If with a will, was it an evil or a good one? If evil, how could it produce a good will? If good, well, then, they had a good will already. And who made this but God Himself who created them with a good will (that is, with the unblemished love by which they could adhere to Him) and who at the same time created their nature and enriched it with grace?

Thus, we are compelled to believe that the holy angels never existed without a good will, that is, without the love of God. But what of those angels who were created good and became evil by their own bad will for which their good nature is not responsible except in so far as there was a deliberate defection from good—for it is never good, but a defection from good, that is the cause of evil? These angels either received less grace of divine love than those who persevered in grace, or, if both were created equally good, then, while

1 . . . *ex se ipso faceret inplendo meliorem prius faciens excitando avidiorem.*

the former were falling by bad will, the latter were increasingly aided to reach that plenitude of beatitude which made them certain that they would never fall—a matter which I discussed in the preceding Book.[2]

Thus with our praise to our Creator, we should all proclaim that, not only of holy men, but also of holy angels, it may be said that 'the charity of God is poured forth' in them 'by the Holy Spirit who has been given' to them.[3] Nor is it the good only of men, but first and foremost that of angels, which is referred to in the words: 'It is good for me to adhere to my God.'[4]

And they who share this common good are in a holy communion both with Him to whom they adhere and one with another, and they form a single community, one City of God, which is also His living sacrifice and His living temple.

This ends the discussion of the origin of this City in so far as it concerns the angels. I must now turn to the rise of that part of the City which is made up of mortal men, created by the same God, who will one day be united to the immortal angels and who, at present, are either sojourning on earth or, if dead, are resting in the hidden sanctuaries where the souls of the departed have their abode.

It was from one man, the first whom God created, that the whole human race took its start. This is the faith revealed in Holy Scripture, a faith that has gained marvelous and merited authority throughout the world and among all peoples—as, along with other truths, Scripture itself divinely predicted would be the case.

2 Cf. above, 11.13.
3 Rom. 5.5.
4 Ps. 72.28.

Chapter 10

I shall not dwell, then, on the conjectures of men who 'know not what they say' concerning the nature and origin of the human race. There are, for example, those who hold the opinion that men—like the universe—have always existed. Thus, Apuleius, in his account of the human race, observes: 'Individually they are mortal but all together as a race they are immortal.'[1]

Suppose the following questions are put to these men: If the human race has always existed, how, then, do you vindicate the truth of your own history which records the names of inventors and what they invented, the first founders of liberal education and of other arts, the first inhabitants of this or that region and of this or that island? They will answer that, at certain intervals of time, most of the land was so devastated by floods and fire that the human race was greatly reduced in size and that from this small number the former population was again restored; and that, thus, at intervals, there was a new discovery and organization of all these things, or, rather, a restoration of what had been damaged or destroyed by the great devastations; and that, in any case, men could simply not exist unless they were produced from man. Of course, all this is opinion, not science.

Chapter 11

Unbelievers are also deceived by false documents which ascribe to history many thousands of years, although we can calculate from Sacred Scripture that not even six thousand years have passed since the creation of man. It would take

1 *De deo Socratis* 4 (ed. Goldbacher, p.8).

too long to show how unfounded all those documents are which chronicle so many thousands of years, and to reveal how unreliable is their authority in this matter. I must be content to take, as an illustration, the letter which Alexander the Great wrote to his mother, Olympias. In it he enclosed a narrative, taken from the sacred archives of Egypt and transcribed by an Egyptian priest. It gave an account of kingdoms which were also known to the Greek historians.

According to the letter of Alexander, the kingdom of Assyria lasted more than 5,000 years; whereas, in Greek history it lasted not quite 1,300 years, counting from the reign of Belus, who is accepted by the Egyptian as the first king of Assyria. So, too, the Persian and Macedonian empire, up to the time of Alexander (to whom the Egyptian was speaking) was reckoned as lasting more than 8,000 years. Now, the Greeks reckoned that the empire of the Macedonians, up to the death of Alexander, lasted only 485 years, and that of the Persians, up to the final victories of Alexander, was given 233 years.

Thus, according to Greek chronology, the years are much fewer, in fact, more than three times fewer, than the Egyptian calculation. The truth is that the original Egyptian year contained no more than four months. Thus, it takes three of them to make up the full, natural year now in use with both of us. Even then the chronologies of Greek and Egyptian history do not agree; and, since the former does not exceed the true number implied in our Sacred Scripture, it may be accepted.

Consequently, if this letter of Alexander, now so well known, is so far from authentic in its chronology, we can trust still less those other documents, so full of mythology, which are cited in opposition to the established authority of our inspired writings. The fact of the prediction that the

whole world would believe and the fact that is has believed should prove that Sacred Scripture has given a true account of the past. Certainly, much that was predicted has been perfectly fulfilled.

Chapter 12

There are others who think that our present world is not everlasting. Of these, some hold that, besides this one, there are a number of other worlds. The remainer, who admit only one world, claim that, over and over again, it periodically disintegrates and begins again. In either theory, they are forced to conclude that the human race arose without human procreation, since there is no room here for the hypothesis that a few men would always remain each time the world perished, as was the case in the previous theory where floods and fires did not affect the whole world but left a few survivors to repeople it. For they hold that, just as the world is reborn out of its previous matter, so a new human race would arise from the elements of nature and only thereafter would a progeny of mortals spring from parents. And the same would be true of the rest of the animals.

Chapter 13

There are some people who complain when we claim that man was created so late. They say that he must have been created countless and infinite ages ago, and not, as is recorded in Scripture, less than 6,000 years ago.

My answer to such people is along the lines of the answer I gave on the question of the origin of the world, to those

who refuse to believe that the world is not eternal but began in time. This was the professed position of Plato—although some suspect that he was not revealing his real conviction.

If the brevity of human history is a puzzle to anyone, if the years seem so few since man was created, according to our authorities, let it be remembered that nothing finite is lasting, that the longest stretch of ages is limited and, in comparison with boundless eternity, not merely short but nothing.

And, therefore, if from the time that God made man we counted not merely five or six but sixty or six hundred thousand years or even sixty times that sum or perhaps six hundred or six hundred thousand times, or this total multiplied and multiplied by itself until we had no number to express it, the same question could still be asked—why was man not created earlier?

For, the past and limitless eternity, during which God refrained from creating man, is so great that, in comparison with it, even the largest and utterly uncountable, though limited, number of ages will seem less than the tiniest drop of water compared to the whole of the ocean that encircles the globe. For the drop of water may be exceedingly small and the ocean incomparably great, but both are finite. However, let any duration of time be stretched however far, so long as it starts from a beginning and is limited by an end, it must reckoned, when compared to something that has no beginning, if not nothing at all, at any rate, utterly inconsiderable.

For, if we should subtract the briefest moments, one by one, from the end of this limited number, no matter how inexpressibly large, such a retrogression by decreasing the number would lead us, eventually, back to the beginning. (It would be like substracting day after day from a man's life, beginning from today, back to his birth.) On the other hand, if we

subtract from a time which had no beginning, not merely minute after minute, or hours, days, months, years or epochs, but aeons after aeons, each so long that no mathematician could name the number of years (yet, utimately reducible to nothing by the deduction of minute after minute), and even if we should go on subtracting aeons, not merely again and again, but forever, what does it matter, since we can never reach the beginning—because there is no beginning to reach.

And so, the question which we, after five thousand and odd years, are asking, our posterity, with the same curiosity, might ask after 600,000 years—that is, if mortal men by birth and death keep on that long in weakness and in ignorance. And even those who lived before us, nearer to the creation of man, could have raised the same question. For that matter, the first man himself, the day after, or even the very day, he was created, could have asked why he had not been created earlier. And however much earlier or later man had been created, this controversy over the beginning of the things of time would rage with the same fury then as now.

Chapter 14

It was this controversy that led the natural philosophers to believe that the only way they could or should solve it was by a theory of periodic cycles of time according to which there always has been and will be a continual renewal and repetition in the order of nature, because the coming and passing ages revolve as on a wheel. These philosophers were not sure whether a single permanent world passes through these revolutions or whether, at fixed intervals, the world itself dissolves and evolves anew, repeating the same pattern of what has already taken place and will again take place

in the future. And from this game of merry-go-round they could find no exemption for the immortal soul—not even for the soul of a philosopher—but it, too, must be ceaselessly on its way to a false beatitude, only to return to its genuine misery.

For, how can a soul be considered truly blessed if, with no assurance of being so eternally, it is either blissfully ignorant of its future misery or unhappily apprehensive of its present bliss? If, however, the soul passes to its beatitude without ever again returning to its former misery, then, in that case, something new takes place in time, which, nevertheless, does not end in time. It this be true, why cannot we say the same of the world? And, also, of the creation of man?

Would to God that people could avoid these round-about aberrations, discovered by false and deceiving philosophers, and stick to the straight path of sound doctrine! Why, there are some people who want to twist even a famous passage in the book of Solomon, called Ecclesiastes, into a defense of these recurring cycles of universal dissolution and re-evocation of the past: 'What is it that hath been? The same thing that shall be. What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done. Nothing under the sun is new, neither is any man able to say: Behold this is new, for it hath already gone before in the ages that were before us.'[1] But, here, Solomon was speaking either of things he had just been discussing—the succession of generations, the revolution of the sun, the course of rivers—or, at any rate, of those creatures in general that come to life and die. For example, there were men before us, they are with us now, and they shall come after us. And the same is true of animals and plants. Even monstrosities which are abnormal at birth, different as they are among themselves and, in certain cases, unique, nevertheless, inas-

1 Eccle. 1.9,10.

much as they come under the heading of prodigies and monsters, have existed before and will exist again and, consequently, it is nothing new or even of recent date that a monster should be born under the sun. However, there are some who interpret the words to mean that what Solomon had in mind was that, in the predestination of God, everything is already a fact and, in that sense, there is nothing new under the sun.

Far be it from us Christians, however, to believe that these words of Solomon refer to those cycles by which, as these philosophers suppose, the same periods of time and sequence of events will be repeated; as if, for example, the philosopher Plato having taught in a certain age at the school of Athens called the Academy, even so, through innumerable ages of the past at long but definite intervals, this same Plato and the same city, the same school and the same disciples all existed and will all exist again and again through innumerable ages of the future. Far be it from us, I say, to believe this.

For, Christ died once for our sins; and 'having risen from the dead, dies now no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him';[2] and we after the resurrection 'shall ever be with the Lord,'[3] to whom we say, as the holy Psalmist reminds us: 'Thou, O Lord, wilt preserve us: and keep us from this generation forever.'[4] And the verse which follows, I think, may be suitably applied to these philosophers: 'The wicked walk round about.' These words do not mean that their life will repeatedly recur in cycle after cycle as they think, but that here and now the way of their errors, that is, their false doctrine, goes around in circles.

2 Rom. 6.9.
3 1 Thess. 4.17.
4 Ps. 11.8.

Chapter 15

No wonder, then, that they keep wandering around and around in these circles and can find neither the entrance nor the exit—neither the origin nor the end of our mortal human race. The trouble is that they cannot penetrate the depth of the wisdom of God, who, though eternal and without beginning, caused time to have a beginning and, in time, created a man, who had not been made before, and He made man, not by a new and sudden resolution, but according to His unchangeable and eternal plan.

Who can descend into the unreachable depths or see into the impenetrable recesses of the mystery of God—without any change in His will—creating, in time, a man before whom no man had ever existed and, then, from this one man multiplying the human race? Not even the Psalmist himself could penetrate the mystery. First, he says: 'Thou, O Lord, wilt preserve us: and keep us from this generation forever.' Then, striking back at the foolish and impious doctrine of those who allow no liberation or eternal beatitude to the soul, he says: 'The wicked walk round about.' Then, as if he had been asked: 'What then do you believe, feel or think? Are we to believe that God chose to make man whom He had never made before during the infinite and eternal past—God to whom nothing new can happen and in whom there is no change?' the Psalmist directs his reply to God: 'According to thy highness thou hast multiplied the children of men.'[1]

Let these men think what they will, he seems to say, and let them hold and dispute whatever opinion they please, but 'according to thy highness,' which no man can know, 'thou hast multiplied the children of men.' For this is, indeed, a great 'highness' or mystery that He Himself always was but

1 Ps. 11.9.

that He willed to create in time a man, whom He had never created before, and this with no change in His will or counsel.

Chapter 16

I would no more dare to affirm that there was ever a time when the Lord God was not Lord than I would hesitate to deny that any man had previously existed before the first man was created in time. When, however, I ask myself of what He could have been a Lord, unless some creatures had always existed, I hesitate to answer, for I realize who I am, and I recall the words: 'For who among men is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of God is? For the thoughts of mortal men are fearful, and our counsels uncertain. For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things.'[1]

There are, certainly, 'many things' that I 'muse upon' in this 'earthly habitation,' for the simple reason that the One Truth, which, perhaps, I do not 'muse' upon, I cannot find among or beyond the many musings. Now, among my many musings, I might say that there has always been some creature over which He was Lord—since He always is and has never been other than Lord—but that it has been one creature at one time and another at another time. I might say this to avoid saying that anything can be co-eternal with the Creator, since faith and sound reason alike condemn such a statement. If I should say this, then, I must also avoid the absurd and erroneous theory that some mortal creature has always existed by reason of one succeeding another that has ceased

1 Wisd. 9.13-15.

to be, whereas no immortal creature began to exist until the angels were created, when God made the universe. I am here supposing that angels may be meant by that 'light' which was first made or, still more, by the 'heavens' in the text: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'[2] At any rate, the angels did not exist before they were created nor can we say that they always existed, if we want to avoid making 'immortal' mean the same as 'co-eternal with God.'

Another 'musing' might be that the angels were not created in time but existed before all time and that God, who has never been other than Lord, was their Lord. But then I may be asked whether, if they were created before all time, they, being creatures, could have always existed. Perhaps I may answer such a question this way. Why cannot we say 'always,' since whatever existed at all times can rightly be said to have existed always? Now, the angels surely existed 'at all times,' since they were created before there was any time at all—that is, if they were created before the heavens and if time began with the heavens. But, supposing time began before the heavens? Not, of course, the time marked by hours, days, months, and years; for these measures of temporal spans, commonly and properly called time, manifestly began with the motion of the stars, as God, in creating them, implied when He said: 'Let them serve as signs and for the fixing of seasons, days and years.'[3] But 'time' may have begun with any motion implying change, motion of which the elements cannot be simultaneous but must be successive. If even before the heavens were created there was some such motion among the angels, then there was time. And if the angels, from the moment they came into being, were subject to this temporal movement, then they existed 'at all times,' since

2 Gen. 1.1.
3 Gen. 1.14,15.

time was created simultaneously with them. And no one will deny that what has existed at all times has always existed.

If I make such a reply, the objections will be raised: But why, then, are the angels not co-eternal with the Creator, if He has always existed and they have always existed? And if we think that they have always existed, how can we say that they were created? Now, how is such an objection to be answered? Must it be said that they have always existed since they have existed at all times—whether they were made along with time or time with them—and, nevertheless, they were created? After all, everyone admits that time itself existed at all times and, neverthelesss, no one denies that time was created. For, if time did not exist at all times, then there was a time when there was no time—which is absurd. We can, of course, say that there was a time when Rome was not, a time when Jerusalem was not, a time when Abraham was not, a time when man was not, and so on; finally, if the world was not made with the beginning of time but some time later, we can say that there was a time when the world was not.

But, to say that there was a time when there was no time is as nonsensical as to say that there was a man when there was no man, or that this world was when this world was not. The reason is that, if we have in mind two distinct objects, we can say, for example, that this man was when that man was not, or that some other time was when this time was not. But no one but a fool would say that there was a time when there was no time.

It is, therefore, one thing to say that time was created and yet always existed—meaning that there was time at all times —and quite another thing to say that the angels have always existed and, therefore, they were not created. For, all we mean when we say that angels always existed is that at all times

there have been angels; and this latter is true only because, without the angels, there could have been no time, for the simple reason that if there is no creature at all by whose successive movements time can be reckoned, then there can be no such thing as time at all. Consequently, even if the angels have always existed, they were created; it does not follow that, because they have always existed, they are co-eternal with the Creator. The Creator has always existed in unchanging eternity, but created things like angels can merely be said to have existed always in the sense that they have existed throughout all that time which could only have come into being because the angels existed. But, since time is co-temporal with movement and change, it cannot possibly be co-eternal with changeless eternity.

Although the course of angelic immortality does not run, as time does, in the sense that there is a past which no longer exists, and a future which does not yet exist, nevertheless, the angelic movements, by which time is brought into being, do pass from being future to being past. The reason why they cannot be co-eternal with the Creator is that in His movement there is nothing that can be said to have been and to be no longer, and there is nothing that will be and is not so already.

Consequently, if God was always the Lord, He has always had some creature to obey His commands, some creature, not begotten of Him, but created by Him out of nothing and not co-eternal with Him. For, the Creator was before this creature was created, although at no time was He without it. There is here a priority that is not to be reckoned by the running of time, but only to be conceived in the stillness of eternity.[4]

4 . . . *nec ei coaeternam; erat quippe ante illam, quamvis nullo tempore sine illa; non eam spatio transcurrente, sed manente perpetuitate praecedens.*

The trouble with a reply like this is that those who ask how the Eternal Creator could have always been Lord, if there were no creature always to serve Him, and why, if such a creature always existed, it was not rather co-eternal with Him than something created—the trouble, I fear, is that they will accuse me of glibly talking about something I do not know instead of teaching something I do.

And so, I return to truths our Creator wanted us all to know. He permits some of the wise among us to know additional truths even in this life, and there are still others which He reserves for the perfect in heaven, but I confess that such matters are over my head. If I have here discussed one such subject—without reaching a decision—it was merely that my readers may avoid such dangerous difficulties, acknowledge their incompetence to handle everything, and realize the wisdom of heeding this wholesome advice of the Apostle: 'By the grace that has been given to me, I say to each one among you: let no one rate himself more that he ought, but let him rate himself according to moderation, and according as God has apportioned to each one the measure of faith.'[5] If an infant is suitably fed, it develops and is able to take more strengthening food, but if its capacity is overtaxed, it weakens before it grows.

Chapter 17

I confess that I do not know what ages passed before the human race was created, yet I am perfectly sure that no creature is co-eternal with the Creator. Curiously enough, the Apostle uses the expression *tempora aeterna* in reference not to the future but to the past. Thus he says: 'in the hope

5 Rom. 12.3.

of eternal life which God, who does not lie, promised before the eternal times, he has in due times manifested, His word.'[1]

He seems to be saying that time stretches backwards eternally; yet time is not co-eternal with God, since not only did God exist 'before eternal times' but He promised eternal life which He manifested in His own time, that is, in due time. Now, what He promised was His Word. For the Word is eternal life. But how did He make this promise, since it was made to men who certainly did not exist before the 'eternal times'? The meaning, then, must be that what was to take place in its own time was already predestined and determined in His eternity and in His co-eternal Word.

Chapter 18

A second truth I am certain of is that no human being whatsoever existed before the creation of the first man—certainly, not the first man himself, pre-appearing in heaven knows how many of those cyclic revolutions of time, nor any one like him. Nor is my faith unsettled by any of the philosophers' arguments, not even by the supposedly most pointed objection that the Infinite cannot be comprehended by any amount of knowledge, and, therefore, that God's knowledge is no more than the finite ideas of all His finite creations. Another argument is that God's goodness was never inactive, for such a belief would imply that He worked in time after spending an idle eternity, as though, repenting of the earlier inertia, He undertook the beginning of His creation.

It is necessary, so the argument goes, that the same things should be continually repeated and should forever keep on passing away only to return again—whether through all these

1 Titus 1.2,3.

changes it is the same world that remains, a created world although eternal and without any beginning in time, or whether it is a world that passes away only to return and keeps on repeating eternally this periodical cycle of changes. For, if, on the one hand, it is said that the works of God began at some definite time, then we would have to believe that He was displeased with the former inertia and inactivity of His eternal leisure and, being moved, as it were, to condemn it, suffered a change.

If, on the other hand, their argument runs, God is to be thought of as creating one thing after another in time until at length He comes to the making of a man whom He had never made before, then it was merely by fits and starts and at the spur of the moment as things came into His head that He made what He made. Certainly, God did not act in virtue of knowledge, since, in their theory, no knowledge can embrace what is infinite.

In a word, they claim, God can be saved from the change either of an unbegun past of long-drawn-out and slothful leisure or of a rash and haphazard creation, only if one accepts the cyclic hypothesis of endlessly repeated patterns of change—whether the same world remains intact throughout or whether it keeps setting into disintegration and rising into newness with each rotation of the wheel of time. Whereas, if one rejects the periodicity of identical patterns, one is left with an infinite diversity of events which no knowledge or pre-knowledge could possibly comprehend.

By such arguments do the pagans try to turn us from the straight path of simple faith and keep us walking around with them in circles.[1] Even if reason could not refute them, faith should laugh at them. But it so happens that, with the help

1 Ps. 12.8. Cf. above, 12.14.

of the Lord our God, clear reasoning breaks the revolving wheels that sophistry makes.[2]

The fundamental fallacy of these men, who prefer to walk in round-about error rather than keep to the straight path of truth, is that they have nothing but their own tiny, changing, human minds to measure the divine mind, infinitely capacious and utterly immutable, a mind that can count uncountable things without passing from one to the next.[3]

Such men, to use the words of the Apostle, 'comparing themselves with themselves,'[4] end by understanding nothing. Of course, every time such philosophers decide to do something, they have to form a new mental resolution because their minds are mutable, and they imagine it is the same with God. Without having a notion of God, they mistake themselves for Him, and, instead of measuring God by God, they compare themselves to themselves.

To us, however, it is simply incredible that God should be affected in one way when He is inactive and in another way when He works, for the simple reason that God cannot be said to be affected at all, in the sense that something can occur in a divine nature which was not already occurring.

Whatever is affected suffers a change and whatever suffers a change is mutable. Hence, one can no more think of God in His leisure suffering from indolence, inactivity, or inertia any more than we can think of Him suffering from labor, effort, or eagerness in His work. For He knows how to rest while He acts and to act while He rests.[5] To every new work whatsoever He applies not a new but an eternal design. Nor

2 . . . *quos opinio* confingit, *ratio manifesta* confringit.
3 . . . innumera *omnia sine cogitationis alternatione* numerantem,
4 2 Cor. 10.12.
5 *Novit quiescens agere et agens quiescere.*

does regret for any former inactivity prompt Him to create what had not been created before.

When His 'former' leisure and 'subsequent' activity is mentioned—and I do not know how man can understand this—surely, the time reference is not to Him, but to things which 'formerly' did not exist but 'subsequently' did, for in Him there is no 'subsequent' choice which modifies or rejects a 'former' resolution. It is by one and the same, eternal, and unchangeable will that He brought it about that His created works should 'formerly' not exist so long as they had no existence and should 'subsequently' exist from the moment they began to be.

Perhaps we might say that what God had most in mind was to reveal, to those who have eyes for such supernatural truth, how little He needed any created things—since He was without them from all eternity and was in no less perfect beatitude than when, out of gratuitous bounty, he created them.

Chapter 19

The second of the fundamental positions I mentioned is that not even the knowledge of God can comprehend anything that is infinite. Very well, then, let them dare to say—from the depths of their abysmal impiety—that God does not know all numbers. Now, numbers are certainly infinite, for at no matter what number you think you have reached an end, you can not merely add one to this number, but you can multiply it by two or any other number including itself; by the very nature of mathematics it does not matter how big or all-embracing the number may be.

Moreover, by the very nature of numbers no one number can be equal to any other number. The result is that, though taken separately, each number is finite, yet, because they are all unequal and different, taken all together, they are infinite. It ought to follow, then, that God does not know all the numbers because they are infinite, and that His knowledge can reach so far and count no further. Now who in the world would be fool enough to say that?

Some of the philosophers, those at least who respect Plato's idea that God designed the cosmos on the principle of numbers, will hardly dare to despise numbers, in the sense of pretending that they are no part of the knowledge of God. And as for us, our Scripture thus addresses God: 'Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight,'[1] and one of the Prophets refers to God as one 'who bringeth forth their world by numbers.'[2] Again, in the Gospel, our Saviour declares that 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered.'[3] We are far, then, from doubting that all numbers are known to Him of whose wisdom, according to the Psalmist, 'there is no number.'[4]

Although, then, there is no definite number corresponding to an infinite number, an infinity of numbers is, nevertheless, not incomprehensible to Him of whose intelligence 'there is no number.' It follows, then, that since whatever is comprehended by knowledge is limited by the very comprehension of the one who knows, in some ineffable way, all infinity is made finite by God since in His knowledge it is not incomprehensible.

Now, if the infinity of numbers cannot be beyond the limits

1 Wisd. 11.21.
2 Cf. Isa. 40.26.
3 Matt. 10.30.
4 Ps. 146.5.

of the knowledge of God which comprehends it, who are we little men that we should presume to put limits to His knoweldge, as is done by those who argue that, unless the same pattern of temporal events is repeated in identical cycles, God can neither foresee what He creates with a view to making it, nor know it after He has made it? The fact is that God, whose knowledge is simple in its multiplicity and one in its diversity, comprehends all incomprehensible things with an incomprehensible comprehension. And this is so true that, even if He willed to keep on endlessly creating one new and dissimilar thing after another, not one of them could possibly seem new and unexpected to Him, nor would He foresee them merely, as it were at the last moment, but by His foreknowledge He would have them before Him throughout all eternity.

Chapter 20

I would not venture to decide the meaning of the expression, 'ages of ages.' God may arrange that 'the ages of ages' be joined in a continuous and ordered series in which each age differs from the one before, without affecting the permanence of the blessed immortality of those who have been freed from misery. Or the ages of ages may be so called that we may understand that the ages, as they remain in the unchanging wisdom of God, are the efficient cause of the ages as they pass in the course of history. Or, it could be that 'ages' is used for 'age,' so that 'ages of ages' merely means the age of age, in much the same way as the 'the heavens of heavens' means the heaven of heaven. For example, God called the firmament, with the waters above it, heaven, yet the psalm

reads: 'let all the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord.'[1]

It is no small problem to decide whether one of these two meanings is true or whether there may even be some other interpretation. However, as far as our present subject goes, the question may be left unsettled, even though a discussion might lead to some definite conclusion or, at least, might make us more cautious of hazarding a rash opinion in matters so obscure.

For the moment, our only purpose is to dispose of the theory of the necessity of periodic cycles of time in which identical occurrences are always repeated. One thing is certain. No matter which of the interpretations of the ages of ages is true, it has nothing in common with these cyclic periods. For, whether the ages of ages are not the repetitions of identical ages but are a series in orderly succession running its course while liberated souls remain unalterably secure in their beatitude with no recurrence of former misery, or whether the ages of ages are a kind of eternal constitution which governs the ages of temporal history—there is no place for those rotating repetitions which are, in any case, completely disproved by the fact of the eternal life of the saints.

Chapter 21

It is not easy for devout ears to listen to philosophers telling them that after this life, spent in so many and such great afflictions, there is nothing to expect but a fleeting felicity. For, what we call life is itself rather a death that so perverts us that, out of love for this living death, we fear that death which would free us from death. Well, we are told that after all

1 Ps. 148.4.

our evil and wickedness have, at long length, been expiated by the help of true religion and wisdom, and have thus come to an end, all we can expect when we attain the vision of God and the beatitude of contemplating His spiritual light and of participating in His immutable immortalty—the goal of all our loving and longing—is that at some time, this, too, must be left behind. And then we shall be cast down from life in eternity, truth, and happiness to infernal mortality, shameful folly, and cursed miseries, in which God is lost, truth is hated, and happiness must be sought in sordid impurities. And we are told that this disaster is to recur again and again, endlessly, at fixed intervals in the future, as it has already occurred and recurred in an eternal past. And we are asked to believe that all this must take place in order to make it possible for God to know what He has done, as though it would be impossible without an eternally periodical recession and return, in ceaseless revolution of false happinesses alternating with true miseries! Otherwise, we are told, God would neither be able to rest from creating nor to hold, in the net of His knowledge, the infinite quarry of creation.[1]

Now, who can listen to such theories? Who can believe or even tolerate them? Even if they were true, it would be wise to say nothing about them, even wiser—if I may speak my mind as emphatically as I can—even wiser to know nothing about them.[2] If we are to be happy in heaven by forgetting such things, why should we add to our misery on earth by getting to know them? And if, up there, we must come to know them, at least, down here, let us ignore them —so that we shall be happier here in hope than there in having the Highest Good; since, here, eternal life can still

1 . . . *neque sciendo potest ea, quae infinita sunt, indagare.*
2 *Quae si vera essent, non solum tacerentur prudentius, verum etiam (ut quo modo valeo dicam quod volo) doctius nescirentur.*

be looked for, but there, it will be known that blessedness is not eternal, since, sooner or later, it must be lost.

Now, these philosophers hold that no one can arrive at beatitude without first having in this life a knowledge of those rotations of alternating happiness and misery. By what logic, then, can they profess that the more one loves God the more easily will he attain beatitude and, at the same time, teach doctrines that tend to discourage this very love? Surely, anyone will be remiss and indifferent in his love for a person, the more certain he is that he will one day be forced to abandon that person and oppose what that person holds for truth and wisdom—and, in the case of a man's love for God, just when he has reached his full capacity of knowledge in the perfection of beatitude. For no man can love even a human friend loyally if he knows that at some time he will become his enemy.

Happily, thank God, these theories are far from the truth when they threaten us with an unending misery, endlessly interrupted by repeated periods of a sham beatitude. There can be no more false and deceptive happiness than one in which we enjoy just enough truth to leave us ignorant of our future unhappiness and just enough joy to leave us fearful of what is to come. If, in heaven, we are to be in ignorance of future misfortune, then, in our misery here below, we are more enlightened, seeing that we are certain of a future beatitude. If, on the other hand, in heaven, disaster is known to be imminent, then the miserable soul, on earth, is happier in this life from which he will be raised to beatitude than the blessed soul in a heaven from which he is to be rotated back into misery. Thus, hope is joy while life is sad; then turns to sadness in our life of joy. The conclusion is that, since here on earth we must suffer present misfortune and there in heaven must fear future evil, it is nearer the truth to say that

we are destined always to be miserable rather than that we are meant, some time or other, to be happy.

But all of these hypotheses are false, as faith proclaims and reason proves. Religion infallibly promises a true and eternal happiness, unfailingly free from all interruptions of unhappiness. Then, let us follow the right way which for us is Christ. With Him as Leader and Saviour, let us turn away our minds and hearts from this unreal and absurd rigmarole of the pagans. Even Porphyry, the Platonist, refused to follow the opinion of his school concerning these ceaseless roundabouts and alternating turnings and returnings of souls. He may have been repelled by the idiocy of the idea or drawn by respect for the new Christian culture. As I mentioned in Book X,[3] Porphyry declared that he preferred the doctrine which taught that the soul was sent into this world to know evil, so that, being freed and purged from it, it might never again suffer it, once it has returned to the Father. How much more, then, should we detest and reject that false philosophy which is so contrary to Christian faith!

Now, once we have seen how shallow and illusory these cyclic theories are, there is no need for us to reject the fact that the human race had a beginning in time, merely because some imaginary gyrations are said to make it impossible for anything new to happen which has not occurred before and which will not recur again at fixed intervals of time in the future. For, once a soul is redeemed and is as sure that it is never to return to its misery as it is sure that its redemption never happened before, then something new has taken place in the soul which never took place before. Moreover, this something new is most extraordinary, nothing less than an eternal felicity which will have no end.[4]

3 Cf. above, 10.30.
4 Cf. above, 11.4.

Now, if, in an immortal nature, such a new occurrence can take place which in no sense is a mere rotary recurrence and which is never to occur again, why should men argue that in mortal natures such novelty is impossible? Even if philosophers pretend that blessedness is nothing new in a soul, but a simple return to a state in which it has always been, at any rate, the soul's liberation is new when the soul is freed from a state of misery in which it has never existed before; and even misery is new in a soul where it appears for the first time. Now, this newness occurred either in the order governed by divine providence, or it happened by chance. If by chance, then where do those determined and measured revolutions fit in, since in them nothing new is supposed to take place, nothing but the same old things repeated just as they were before?

But, if this newness is not unrelated to providential order (whether the soul is given a body as an experience or is imprisoned in it as a punishment for sins), then it is possible to have occurrences which are both absolutely new and also part of an ordered pattern of nature. Now, suppose that it was by its own imprudence that the soul fell into a new misery which, however, was not unforeseen in divine providence and which, therefore, no less than the liberation from it, was a part of the order of nature. In that case, how dare we, with our rash human vanity, deny that God can create beings which are new—not, of course, to Him, but to the world—and which He never created before nor could even consider unexpected.

One philosophical escape is to pretend that, although these or those liberated souls will not return again to misery, liberation itself is nothing new, since there always has been, is now, and ever will be the liberation of successive souls. Well, if this is so, at least, they agree that new souls are continually coming into being for whom misery and liberation are new

experiences. They cannot say that those souls are not new but eternal, out of which new men are being daily created, who, if they live wisely, will be liberated from their bodies, never to return to their misery; because, if they do, they will have to admit that the number of these souls is infinite.

For no finite number of souls—however great the number—would have sufficed for the perpetual creation of new men from all eternity, men whose souls were to be forever freed from this mortality and never again to return to it. Now, these philosophers have not the slightest chance of explaining how there can be an infinite number of souls while, at the same time, the number of things created must be finite in order to be known by God.

Therefore, with these hypothetical rotations brought to a stop, we need not suppose that the soul will return to its former misery. What, then, could be wiser for a Christian than to take it on faith that it is quite possible for God to create new beings, hitherto uncreated, and this, in virtue of His ineffable foreknowledge, without implying the least change in His will.

As to the further question whether the number of souls liberated once and for all from their misery can go on increasing forever, let those who debate so subtly to limit the infinity of things settle it among themselves. I shall end this discussion with a dilemma. If the numbers of liberated souls can go on increasing, there is no reason to deny the creation of a thing that had never been created before. For, in the present case, the number of liberated souls is a number that never existed before and it is a number that has not merely come into being once, but it is one that goes on increasing forever. If, on the other hand, the number cannot go on increasing, but there must be some definite number of liberated souls who will never return to their misery, then

this number, whatever it is, is certainly one that never existed before, but it is also one that could not have increased and reached its present quantity without having had some beginning. But no such beginning ever existed before. It was in order that there might be such a beginning that the first man was created, before whom there was no man.

Chapter 22

Now that I have explained, as well as I could, this difficult question of the eternal God creating new things without any change in His will, it is simple enough to see how much better it was for God to multiply the human race from one man whom He created rather than to develop it from many.

In regard to other animals, we see that He created some to be solitary, lone rangers, so to speak, like eagles, hawks, lions, wolves, and so on; and others to be gregarious, animals that prefer to live together in flocks, such as doves, starlings, stags, and others of the kind. However, He propagated neither of these classes from a single pair, but ordered the creation of several at the same time.

On the other hand, He created man with a nature midway between angels and beasts, so that man, provided he should remain subject to his true Lord and Creator and dutifully obey His commandments, might pass into the company of the angels, without the intervention of death, thus to attain a blessed and eternal immortality. But, should he offend his Lord and God by a proud and disobedient use of his free will, then, subject to death and a slave to his appetites, he would have to live like a beast and be destined to eternal punishment after death. Therefore, God created one sole individual, not that he was meant to remain alone deprived

of human companionship, but in order that the unity of society and the bond of harmony might mean more to man, since men were to be united not only by the likeness of nature but also by the affection of kinship. God did not even wish to create the woman who was to be mated with man in the same way that He created man but, rather, out of him, in order that the whole human race might be derived entirely from one single individual.

Chapter 23

God was not unaware that man would sin and, being subjected to death, would propagate mortals destined to die; and that these mortals would go so far in the monstrousness of sin that even the beasts without power of rational choice, that had been created in numbers from the waters and the earth, would live more securely and peacefully among their own kind than men—even though the human race had been given a single progenitor for the very purpose of promoting harmony. And, in fact, neither lions nor dragons have ever waged such wars with their own kind as men have fought with one another.

However, God also foresaw that a community of saints would be called to supernatural adoption, would have their sins forgiven, be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and finally be united with the holy angels in eternal peace, so that, at last, the enemy death will be destroyed.[1] And God knew how good it would be for this community often to recall that the human race had its roots in one man, precisely to show how pleasing it is to God that men, though many, should be one.

1 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.26.

Chapter 24

When God made man according to His own image, He gave him a soul so endowed with reason and intelligence that it ranks man higher than all the other creatures of the earth, the sea, the air, because they lack intelligence. God, then, formed man out of the dust of the earth and, by His breath, gave man a soul such as I have described. It is not certain whether God's breathing imparted to man a soul previously created or whether God created the soul by the act of breathing, as though He wanted the soul of man to be the very breath of God. (Notice that to breathe is the same as to *make* a breathing.)

Next, He took a bone from the man's side and made of it a mate to collaborate in procreation. Of course, all this was done in a divine way. We must not imagine the process in a material way, as though God worked, as ordinary artists do, with hands, shaping, as best they can, some earthly material into a form dictated by the rules of art. The 'hand' of God means the power of God which works in an invisible way to produce even visible results. If some people take these true facts for mere fables it is because they use familiar, everyday craftsmanship to measure that power and wisdom of God which not merely can but does produce even seeds without seeds. And as for those things which God first created, they refuse to believe them on the ground that they have no way to know them. Yet, they know facts about human conception and birth which would seem far more incredible if they were told to others who did not know them and, what is more, they often think such things can be attributed to natural, physical causes rather than to the efficacy of any divine action.

Chapter 25

In this work, I am not dealing with those who do not believe that the divine mind was a Creator and has a care for what He created, but with those who, along with Plato, distinguished between the Supreme God who created the cosmos and the lesser gods, who, so they think, were created by God and had God's consent or command to be creators themselves. These gods are supposed to have made all mortal animals and, especially, man who ranks so near to the gods themselves. Now, if these philosophers would only give up their superstitious attempt to justify the rites and sacrifice they offer to these gods as to their creators, they would easily escape from the error of believing that anyone but God can create.

Even before the nature of God is understood, it is wrong to think and say that there can be any other Creator of any nature whatsoever, however tiny and mortal it may be. Even though the angels (whom the Neo-Platonists prefer to call gods) can be ordered or permitted to aid God in producing what the earth brings forth, they can no more be called creators of animals than farmers can be called the creators of crops and trees.

Chapter 26

The word 'form' has two meanings. Every material body has an outer form shaped by a potter, or smith, or other artisan who can paint or fashion even forms that look like the shapes of animals. But there is also an inner form which is not a shape but a shaper, with an efficient causality deriving from the secret and hidden determination of some living and intelligent nature which can shape not merely the outer forms

of physical bodies but the inner souls of living things. The first kind of form we may attribute to any artificer, but the second, only to the one Artificer, Creator and Maker, who is God. It is He who created the universe and all the angels before there were any worlds or any angels there to help him.

It was by this divine creative power, which, so to speak, knows not what it is to be made but only how to make, that the form of roundness was given to the sky and to the sun when the cosmos was created. It was by this same divine creative force, which knows not what it is to be made but only how to make, that roundness was given to the eye, to the apple, and to other objects that are by nature round and which we see all about, taking on their form with no extrinsic cause but by the intrinsic power of the Creator, who said: 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?'[1] and whose wisdom 'reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly.'[2]

So, I do not see what kind of aid the angels, who were first made, could give to the Creator in the production of other things. I neither dare to attribute to them what, perhaps, they cannot do nor ought I to detract from any power they actually possess. But, as for the creation and origin of all natures as such, that I attribute solely to God, and, in this, the angels join me, since they gratefully acknowledge that they are indebted to Him for all that they are.

Not only do we deny that farmers are the creators of their crops—'neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the growth'[3]—but we refuse to the earth itself creative power, even though she seems to be the fruitful mother of all that she prompts to sprout from seeds while

1 Jer. 23.24.
2 Wisd. 8.1.
3 1 Cor. 3.7.

holding them down by roots. We remember what Scripture tells us: 'God gives it a body even as he has willed, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.'[4] Nor do we look upon a woman as the creator of the child she bears, since He is the Creator who said to one of His servants: 'Before I formed thee in the bowels of thy mother, I knew thee.'[5]

Although it is true that this or that emotion of a pregnant woman may have some effect on the child she is bearing—as Jacob's variegated staffs affected the colors of the lambs to be born—nevertheless, the mother herself no more creates the nature of her child than she creates herself.

Therefore, whatever bodily or seminal causes may play a part in reproduction, whether by the influence of angels or of men or other animals, or by the intermingling of the two sexes, and whatever longings or emotions of the mother may affect the features or the color while the fetus is still soft and pliable, nevertheless, every nature as such, however affected by circumstances, is created wholly by the Supreme God. It is the hidden and penetrating power of His irresistible presence which gives being to every creature that can be said to be, whatever its genus and species may be. For, without His creative act, a nature would not only not be in this or that genus; it simply could not have being at all.[6]

Everyone admits, even when there is question of the outward form which artisans impose on material things, that it was not the masons and architects who were the founders of Rome and Alexandria, but the kings, by whose purpose, plan, and power these cities were built. In the one case, Romulus was the founder, and, in the other, Alexander. Obviously, then, we should acknowledge that God alone is the Founder

4 1 Cor. 15.38.
5 Jer. 1.5.
6 Cf. *De Trin.* 3.13-16.

of every nature. In His creation, He uses no material and no workmen which He Himself has not made. And if He were to withdraw, so to speak, His building power from creatures, they would no more exist than they existed before they were created. The 'before,' of course, refers not to time but to eternity. For He alone could be the Creator of time who created those things whose motions are the measure of time.

Chapter 27

Of course, when Plato taught that the lesser gods, made by the Supreme God, were the makers of the mortal part of all other animals, he knew that the immortal part came from God;[1] therefore, he maintained that the lesser gods were responsible not for our souls but only for our bodies.

Now, Porphyry, who claims that the soul must free itself from all matter if it is to be purified, at the same time agrees with Plato and his followers that those who in life transgressed the moderation of mortality must return to mortal bodies for their purgation and punishment—not, however, to bodies of beasts, as Plato held, but only to those of men. Now, notice the conclusion. The so-called gods whom they want us to worship, as though they were our parents or makers, are, in reality, nothing more than the forgers of our fetters and our prison bars, not our creators but our incarcerators, who weigh us down with chains in wretched prisons.

So, let these Platonists, then, take their choice. Either they should stop threatening us with reincarnation as a punishment for our souls, or else they should stop telling us to worship as gods beings who are responsible for the one part of our make-

1 *Timaeus* 41C.

up that they encourage us to avoid as much as possible. The fact is that both the reincarnation and the responsibility are equally ridiculous. As to the former, there is no such thing as a return to this life for the punishment of souls; as to the latter, the sole responsibility for all living things in heaven or on earth belongs to the God who created heaven and earth.

If punishment is the only reason why a soul should inhabit a body, how can Plato declare that the only way to make the universe so perfect and beautiful was to have it filled with every genus of animals, mortal as well as immortal?[2] And if our creation, even as mortals, is due to God, how can the return to bodies which are gifts of God be punishment? And if God, as Plato continually reminds us, contains in His eternal intelligence the forms of the entire universe and of every living creature within it, how is it that He did not create them all Himself? Could it be that He was unwilling to be Creator of some of those things, the design for whose creation He possessed within His ineffable and ineffably admirable intelligence?

Chapter 28

It follows that the true religion is right in recognizing and teaching that the Creator of the whole universe is the same as the Creator of all living things, that is, of all souls and all bodies. And of all the animals on earth the main one is man. He was made to be the image of God, and, for the reason previously given or for some better one unknown to me, only one man was made—although he did not remain alone. For there is nothing so social by nature, so anti-social by sin, as

2 *Ibid.* 92B.

man. And if any man should ever need an argument against the evil of dissension, either to prevent it breaking out or to bring it to an end, there is nothing better than to recall that single father of all our human race whom God created as a solitary individual, for the precise purpose of reminding us to preserve unity of heart in a multitude of men. And the fact that a woman was made from the side of the man shows clearly enough how highly we were meant to esteem the relationship between husband and wife.

Of course, these works of God are extraordinary because they are His first. But no one who refuses so to believe them has a right to believe in any kind of prodigies, for nothing would be even called a prodigy if it happened in the ordinary course of nature. As for that greater governance of divine providence, everything that happens has a purpose even though the causes are hidden. The inspired Psalmist sings: 'Come and behold ye the works of the Lord: what wonders [*prodigia*] he hath done upon earth.'[1] Later on,[2] with God's help, I shall explain what is prefigured by the first prodigy[3]—if I may so call it—the creation of woman from the side of man.

But now, since I must put an end to this Book, I shall merely say that, in my view, in this first man created in the beginning, there was established, not as yet, indeed, in actual appearance but in the foreknowledge of God, the origin of these two cities or societies, as far as concerns the human race. From this first man were to come all men, some to be associated with the bad angels in their punishment and others to be

1 Ps. 45.9.
2 Cf. Vol.3, 22.17.
3 Through this passage there is a play on the pagan word, *prodigium*, a pointing out beforehand, a prophetic sign and, hence, any portent or marvel, and the word, *providentia*, in the Christian sense of God's foresight or foreknowledge from eternity.

fellow citizens with the good angels in their reward. All this was ordered by a secret yet just judgment of God, for Scripture tells us that 'all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth,'[4] and we know that His grace can never be unjust nor His justice ever cruel.

4 Ps. 25.10.

BOOK THIRTEEN

Chapter 1

Now that I have discussed the intricate problem about the origin of the world and the beginning of the human race, a proper order calls for a study of the fall of the first man, in fact, of the first parents, and of the origin and transmission of human mortality. It is true that God did not endow man with the same nature that He gave to the angels—who could not possibly die even if they sinned—yet, had our first parents complied with the obligations of obedience, they, too, would have attained, without interruption of death, an immortality like that of the angels and an everlasting happiness. However, as I have pointed out in the preceding Book,[1] God so made men that, should they disobey, death was to be a just judgment for their disobedience.

Chapter 2

It seems to me that I ought to examine more carefully the nature of death. For, although the human soul is, in a true sense, immortal, nonetheless it, too, can suffer its own sort of death. It is said to be immortal because it can never, in the least degree, cease to live and perceive. The body, on the other hand, is mortal because it can be deprived entirely of

1 Cf. above, 12.21.

life and because, of itself, it has no power to live. Death comes to the soul when God abandons it, just as death comes to the body when the soul departs.

There is also a total death for man, a death of body and soul, namely, when a soul, abandoned by God, abandons the body. In this case, the soul has no life from God and the body no life from the soul. The consequence of such total death is the second death, so called on the authority of divine Revelation.[1] This is the death which our Saviour meant when He said: 'Be afraid of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'[2]

Since this second death does not occur until soul and body are reunited, never to be separated again, you might wonder how the body is said to die by a death in which it is not deserted by the soul but rather is given a life by the soul to feel the torment it endures. For, in man's last and everlasting punishment (of which I shall have more to say in its proper place[3]) the soul is rightly said to be dead when its life from God is gone, but, since the body's life depends on the soul, how can the body be said to be dead? If the body were dead, it could not feel the bodily torments which are to be felt after the resurrection.

Perhaps it is because any sort of life is a real good while pain is an evil that we ought not to say that a body is alive when the only purpose of its soul is not so much to give it life but rather to keep it in pain.[4] The soul takes its life from God when it lives holily, for the reason that it cannot live holily unless God is the cause of its good works.[5] The body,

1 Apoc. 2.11; 20.14; 21.8.
2 Matt. 10.28.
3 Cf. below, 19.28.
4 . . . *ideo nec vivere corpus dicendum est, in quo anima non vivendi causa est, sed dolendi.*
5 . . . *non enim potest bene vivere nisi Deo in se operante quod bonum est.*

however, takes its life from the soul when the soul is alive in the body, whether the soul is receiving any life from God or not. Life in the bodies of the impious is not the life of their souls, but simply the life of their bodies. This life, even souls that are dead, in the sense of being deserted by God, can confer, since they do not desist from that flicker of life which they can call their own, that is, the life which makes them immortal.

It is true that, when a man is finally damned, he does not lose sensation; nevertheless, because his feelings are not gentle enough to give pleasure nor soothing enough to be restful, but are purifying to the point of pain, they can more properly be called death rather than life. The reason why this death of damnation is called a second death is that it comes after that first death which is a divorce of two natures meant to be in union, whether God and the soul or the soul and the body. It can be said of the first death, the death of the body, that it is good for saints and bad for sinners,[6] but of the second that it is certainly good for no one and non-existent for the saints.

Chapter 3

I know, of course, that in saying that the death which sunders soul and body is, in reality, good for the saints I have raised a difficulty which cannot be dismissed. If that be so, how can death be considered the punishment of sin? Certainly, if the first parents had not sinned, they would not have suffered this death. But, how can something that could not have happened except to sinners be good for the saints?

6 . . . *quod bonis bona sit, malis mala; secunda vero sine dubio sicut nullorum bonorum est, ita nulli bona.*

Besides, if it could not have happened except to sinners, it should not even happen to the saints, let alone be good for them. For, why should those who deserve no punishment be punished?

The answer seems to be that, while the first parents were so created that, had they not sinned, they would have experienced no kind of death, nevertheless, these first sinners were so punished that all of their descendants were to be subject to the same penalty of death. No one was to be born of them who was less a sinner than they were. Such was the greatness of the guilt that the punishment so impaired human nature that what was originally a penal condition for the first parents who sinned became a natural consequence in all of their descendants.

Man is not produced from man in the same way that he was created from the dust. Dust was but the material out of which man was made, while a man is the parent of his child. Earth and flesh are not identical, even though the latter was made from the former, but parent and offspring are identical in having the same human nature. Hence, when the first couple were punished by the judgment of God, the whole human race, which was to become Adam's posterity through the first woman, was present in the first man. And what was born was not human nature as it was originally created but as it became after the first parents' sin and punishment—as far, at least, as concerns the origin of sin and death.

Note that sin and punishment did not reduce the first man to that infantile state of mental and physical weakness which we see in children; but God did will that human progeny should begin life much as animals do, seeing that the first parents had been lowered to the level of beasts during their life and in death, as Scripture has pointed out: 'Man when he was in honor did not understand: he is compared to sense-

less beasts, and is become like to them.'[1] Actually, the human infant is far weaker in the use and movement of its limbs and in its appetitive and protective sense than the most tender offspring of any other ánimal. It would seem that the human faculties were meant, all the more, to excel those of other animals, just because their early energies are held in check, like an arrow drawn far back by the bending of a bow.

Now, the first man's sinful presumption and just punishment did not reduce him to this infantile condition. However, in his person, human nature was so changed and vitiated that is suffers from the recalcitrance of a rebellious concupiscence and is bound by the law of death. And what the first man became by perversion and penalty, this his descendants are by birth—natures subject to sin and death.

If, through the grace of the Mediator Christ, infants are redeemed from the bondage of sin, then they can suffer only that death which separates the soul from the body; being freed from the bondage of sin, they do not pass to that second death which is both penal and eternal.

Chapter 4

If one should wonder why death, which is the punishment of sin, must be borne by those whose guilt has been annulled by grace, I must refer him to another work of mine[1] which deals with the baptism of infants and which discusses and answers the present question. I have there offered as an explanation why the soul must endure separation from the body, in spite of the connection with sin being removed, that, were the immortality of the body to follow immediately upon

1 Ps. 48.13.

1 *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum* 2.39.

the sacrament of regeneration, faith might be weakened, since faith is really faith only when, in hope, it awaits that which is not yet seen in substance.

In former ages, at least, there was need to face the fear of death with a robust and aggressive faith, as was so clear in the case of the holy martyrs. Indeed, these saints would have enjoyed no glory and no victory, since there could have been no strife, if, once they were made holy by the waters of regeneration, they could suffer no bodily death. Who would not run to join the infants about to be baptized, if the main purpose of Christ's grace were to save us from bodily death? Thus, faith would be put to no test by an invisible reward; it could not even be called faith; it would be merely a desire to receive an immediate reward of its work.

But now, by a greater and more wonderful grace of the Saviour, the punishment of sin serves the purposes of sanctity. In the beginning, the first man was warned: 'If you sin, you shall die'; now, the martyr is admonished; 'Die that you may not sin.' The first man was told: 'If you transgress, you shall die the death'; now, the martyr is reminded: 'If you refuse death, you transgress the commandment.' What before was to be feared, if a man were to keep himself from sin, is now to be faced, if he is not to sin.

Thus, by the ineffable mercy of God, the penalty of sin is transformed into the panoply of virtue and the punishment of the sinner into the testing of a saint. In the case of the first parents, death was incurred by sinning; now, sainthood is attained by dying. This is true of the holy martyrs. To them, their persecutors offered the alternative: either deny the faith or die. And the saints choose to suffer for their faith what the first sinners had no choice but to suffer for their infidelity. The sinners would not have died unless they sinned; the saints will sin unless they die. The sinners died because they sinned;

the martyrs do not sin because they die. In the one case, guilt was pursued by punishment; in the other case, the punishment keeps the guilt at bay.

This does not mean that death, which before was an evil, has now become something good. But it means that God has rewarded faith with so much grace that death, which seems to be the enemy of life, becomes an ally that helps man enter into life.

Chapter 5

When the Apostle wished to express the power of sin to harm a man who is not aided by grace, he did not hesitate to say that this power lies in the very Law which prohibits sin. 'Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law.'[1] Nothing could be truer. For a prohibition always increases an illicit desire so long as the love of and joy in holiness is too weak to conquer the inclination to sin; and, without the aid of divine grace, it is impossible for man to love and delight in sanctity.

However, lest people might think that the Law were evil, by reason of the expression, 'the power of sin,' the Apostle, in another context, put the matter thus: 'So that the Law indeed is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. Did then that which is good become death to me? By no means! But sin, that it might be manifest as sin, worked death for me through that which is good.' Thus, a sinner or a sin, by reason of the commandment, might become immeasurably worse.[2] He says 'immeasurably' because the transgression is worse

1 1 Cor. 15.56.

2 Rom. 7.12,13. . . . *ut fiat super modum peccator aut peccatum per mandatum*, The Vulgate reads: . . . *ut fiat supra modum peccans peccatum per mandatum.*

when an increasing desire of sin causes the Law itself to be despised.

Why do I consider it necessary to mention this? For the simple reason that, as the Law is not evil, though it increases the concupiscence of sinners, neither is death good, though it increases the reward of the martyrs. The Law, when defied through love of evil, produces sinners; death when suffered through love of truth produces martyrs. Thus, the Law is good because it is the prohibition of sin; death is evil because it is the penalty of sin. Wickedness makes a bad use not only of evil, but also of good. In the same way, holiness makes a good use not only of good, but also of evil. Thus, sinners make a bad use of the Law, although the Law is good, while saints make a good use of death, although death is an evil.

Chapter 6

Mere physical death, the separation of soul and body that the dying must endure, is not good for anyone. For, there is something harsh and unnatural in the violent sundering of what, in a living person, were so closely linked and interwoven; and the experience lasts until there is a complete loss of all feeling that depends on the union of soul and body. Sometimes, however, the body is battered or the soul is snatched away so swiftly that there is no time to feel the anguish of dying.

However painful the feeling of a dying person that all feeling is falling away, if it is suffered with faith and piety, it increases the merit of patience, without, however, forfeiting its claims to be called a punishment. Undoubtedly, death is the penalty of all who come to birth on earth as descendants of the first man; nevertheless, if the penalty is paid in the name

of justice and piety, it becomes a new birth in heaven. Although death is the punishment of sin, sometimes it secures for the soul a grace that is a security against all punishment for sin.

Chapter 7

I have in mind those unbaptized persons who die confessing the name of Christ. They receive the forgiveness of their sins as completely as if they had been cleansed by the waters of baptism. For, He who said: 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,'[1] made exceptions in other decisions which are no less universal: 'Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven';[2] and again: 'He who loses his life for my sake will find it.'[3]

So, too, in the psalm: 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'[4] For, what could be more precious than a death which remits all sin and amasses merit? Men, unable to defer their death, who are baptized, and thus depart from life with all their sins forgiven, are not equal in merit to those who have not postponed death, although they could have done so, because they preferred to lose life by confessing Christ rather than, by denying Him, to gain time for baptism.

Of course, if through fear of death they did deny Christ, even that sin could be canceled by the baptism which washed away even the heinous outrage of those who killed Christ. But, what shall we say when, without the fullness of grace of the

1 John 3.5.
2 Matt. 10.32.
3 Matt. 16.25.
4 Ps. 115.15.

Spirit, that 'blows where it will,'[5] they were able to love Christ so much that they were unable to deny Him even in the face of a death from which they could so easily have escaped..

The precious death of the saints, for whom the death of Christ had already merited so much grace that they hastened to lose their own lives in order to find Him, proves that the right use of death, which originally was intended as the punishment of sin, may bring forth abundant fruits of holiness. Death itself, however, should not, on this account, be looked upon as good since it was turned to good account not by any goodness of its own, but by the help of God. Originally, death was ordained as something to be feared, to prevent sin from being committed; now, it is proposed as something to be endured, both that sin may not be committed and, if already committed, may be deleted so that the palm of sanctity may be granted for this great victory.

Chapter 8

If we look a little more closely, we shall notice that, even when a man dies out of faith and loyalty to the truth, he escapes death. His motive in facing a partial death is to escape total death and, above all, a death which is eternal. He suffers the separation of his soul from his body to prevent its separation both from God and his body—to prevent a first death of the whole man which would be followed by a second and eternal death.

Thus, in a word, while men are in the throes of death and death is bringing on disintegration, death is good for no one, but it may become meritorious if suffered to retain or to

5 John 3.8.

gain some good.[1] However, when it is a question, not of dying, but of being dead, then death may well be said to be bad for sinners and good for saints. For, the separated souls of the saints are now in peace, while those of the wicked are in pain, and will be so until the resurrection of their bodies, when the former will enter into life everlasting and the latter into a second and eternal death.

Chapter 9

But, what about the precise moment in which the soul—whether saintly or sinful—is separated from the body? Does it belong to the dying or to the dead? If it belongs to the dead, then it is not dying (now over and past), but the present living of the soul that is good or bad. Dying, while it was going on, while people were enduring it, was bad for the dying, because they felt it like a burden and a pain—although for the good it was an evil of which they could make good use. But, when the dying is over and past, how can death be either good or evil?

If we pursue the matter further we shall realize that not even the feeling of dying which I described as a burden and a pain, not even that is really death itself. For, as long as men can feel they are certainly alive, and if they are still alive then they must be said to be this side of death rather than dead. For, when death comes, it takes away all that feeling which was so painful while death was approaching. So, it is difficult to explain how we can say that men are dying when they are not yet dead but, with death imminent, are tossing in their final and fatal affliction. Yet it is right to call them dying because when death, which is pending, arrives they are said to be dead, not dying.

1 . . . *tenendo vel adipiscendo bono.*

The fact is that only a living man can be said to be dying. Even when a man is so close to death that, as we say, he is in his last gasp, he is still alive until the breathing stops. At one and the same time, he is both living and dying—leaving life and nearing death. He is alive because his soul is still in his body; he is not dead because the soul has not yet departed. But, as soon as the soul has gone, he is no longer 'in death,' but, rather, 'after dying.' Just when, then, is a man 'in death'? If no man can be both living and dying at one and the same time, then there is no such thing as a dying man. For as long as the soul is in the body, we cannot deny that the man is living. If we insist on saying that a man at the point of death is dying, and if we agree that no one can be both living and dying at the same time, then when in the world is he living?

Chapter 10

From the first moment that life begins in a mortal body every movement made hastens the approach of death, for the simple reason that, in the whole course of life—if it can be called life—the changes in the body make up a march toward death. There is no one who will not be nearer to death next year than last, tomorrow than today, today than yesterday, a moment from now than now, and nearer now than a moment ago. For, every moment that is lived subtracts from the length of life, and day after day less and less remains. Thus, the course of life is nothing but a race toward death, a race in which no one may stand still or slow down even for a moment, but all must run with equal speed and never-changing stride. For, to the short-lived as to the long-lived, each day passes with unchanging pace. Both run with equal

speed, one to a nearer, the other to a farther, post, but for both the same-lengthed minutes are left equally behind. And as to make a journey longer does not mean to slow the traveler's steps, so on the way to death the man who takes more time travels no more slowly, even though he covers much more ground.

Then, too, if a man begins to die, to be, that is, 'in death,' from the moment that his death gets under way, that is, when the cessation of life begins (not when life has completely ceased, for then he is no longer 'in death' but is 'after dying'), the conclusion is that he is 'in death' from the moment of birth. For, what else is taking place throughout each moment, hour, day of a man's life until, the dying over, the death which was coming is finally complete, and the time 'after death' begins, replacing the time 'in death' which lasted while life was ebbing away.

Thus, man is never truly 'in life' from the moment that he inhabits this dying rather than living body—that is, if it is impossible to be both 'in life' and 'in death' at one and the same time; unless the man is in both, in the sense that he is in the life he is living until all vitality is consumed and in the death in which he is dying while life is ebbing away. If he is not in some kind of life, what is it that goes on ebbing away until there is none left? And if he is not in some kind of death, what is meant by the ebbing of life? It would be senseless to speak of the moment 'after death,' when all vitality is out of the body, unless the lessening of life iself were death. For, if a man is not 'in death' but is 'after dying' the moment that all life has disappeared, when can we ever say that a man is dead except while he is dying?

Chapter 11

It is foolish, then, to say that a man is 'in death' before he arrives at death—for, if he is, then toward what goal is he approaching while he is finishing the course of his life? In fact, to declare that a man is alive and dead at the same time is as monstrous as to claim—what is impossible—that he is awake and asleep at the same time. This being so, the question arises: When is a man a dying man? Before death comes, he is not dying but is living; when death has come, he is not dying but dead. The one state, then, is before death, and the other after.

Just when, then, is man 'in death,' that is to say, when is he dying? Now, there are three distinct periods of time—before, in, and after death—corresponding to three states of a man—living, dying, and dead; but it is difficult to determine just when a man is dying, that is to say, 'in death.' For, he cannot be living, since that is a state 'before death'; nor can he be dead, for that is a state 'after death.' As long as the soul is in the body, especially if sensation is present, undoubtedly a man, composed of both soul and body, is still alive and, therefore, 'before death,' and not 'in death.' But, once the soul has departed and taken away all bodily sensation, then the time 'after death' has begun and the man is pronounced dead.

Between 'alive' and 'dead' there is no room left for a third state in which a man is 'dying' or 'in death'; for, if alive, the time is 'before death'; if he has ceased to live, the time is 'after death.' It is clear, then, that he is never 'dying' or 'in death.'

It is like trying to find the 'present' in the course of time and failing because it is merely the unmeasurable transition from 'future' to 'past.' Does it not seem that, for the same

reason, there is no such thing as the death of the body? If there is, just when can a thing exist which cannot be in anyone and no one can be in it? If a man is still alive, his death does not yet exist, since being alive is 'before death,' not 'in death'; and if being alive has ceased then his state is 'after,' not 'in death,' and again death has no existence. Now, if there is no death either before or after something, then what do the expressions 'before death' and 'after death' mean? It is silly to use such terms if there is no death. Would to God that in Eden we had lived so well that, in truth, there were no such thing as death. However, as things now are, death is so bitterly real that we have neither words to bewail it nor ways to escape it.

Let us, then, follow established usage (as, of course, we ought) and say 'before death,' before death occurs, as Scripture does: 'Praise not any man before death.'[1] And when death has occurred, let us say: After the death of this man or that one, this or that happened. And let us use a kind of continuous present tense, as we well may when, for example, we say: 'While he was dying, he made his will,' or 'While he was dying, he left such and such to so and so,' although, of course, the man could do nothing of the kind except while he was living, and, if anything, he did it 'before death' rather than 'in death.' However, let us follow the usage of Holy Scripture which does not hesitate to say even of those who are dead that they are 'in death,' not 'after death.' Take, for example, the verse: 'For there is no one in death, that is mindful of thee.'[2]

Until the day of resurrection we can rightly say that men are 'in death' as we say that a person is asleep until he awakes. However, although we say that those who are asleep

1 Eccli. 11.30.
2 Ps. 6.6.

are sleeping, we cannot likewise say that those who are dead are dying. When it is a question of the death of the body—the subject I am now discussing—those who have already been separated from their bodies cannot be said to be still dying. Now, this is, as I have already said, something that cannot be put into words—just how the dying can be said to be alive, or the dead, even after death, be said to be in death.

For, how can a man be after dying if he is still dying, especially since we do not use 'dying' as we use 'sleeping' for those who are asleep, and 'fainting' for those in a faint, and 'sorrowing' for those in sorrow, or 'living' for those who are alive. The dead, however, before they rise again are said to be 'in death,' yet cannot be said to be dying.

Thus, quite fitly and consistently, I think, it has happened, not by any human plan but perhaps by a divine purpose, that grammarians are not able to conjugate the verb *moritur* in Latin according to rules governing other verbs. The perfect tense of the verb *oritur* is *ortus est* and the tenses of all similar verbs are derived from the perfect participle. Yet, if we ask what is the perfect of *moritur,* the answer is *mortuus est* with a double *u*; *mortuus* being pronounced in the same way as *fatuus, arduus, conspicuus,* and such like words which are not perfect participles but, like nouns, are declined without reference to tense. But *mortuus,* a noun, is used as a perfect participle, as though something indeclinable were meant to be declined.[3] Thus, there is something congruous in the fact that the word expressing death can no more be declined than the reality of death.

What can be done, however, by the grace of our Redeemer, is to decline, at least, the second death, which is much more grievous—in fact, the worst of all evils—since it is not the result of a mere separation of soul and body but of a reunion

3 . . . *quasi ut declinetur, quod declinari non potest* . . .

for the purpose of eternal punishment. In eternal life, as distinguished from temporal life, men will never be before or after but always in death, that is to say, never alive, never dead, but eternally dying. And never is a man worse off in death than when death itself is deathless.

Chapter 12

The next question to be asked is with what death God threatened our first parents, should they disobey and transgress the command He had given them. Was it the death of the soul, or of the body, or of the entire man, or the so-called second death? The answer is: every kind of death.

The first death includes two deaths; total death includes all.[1] As the whole earth includes many lands and the whole Church many churches, so the total death embraces many deaths. The first death includes two, that of the soul and that of the body; so that the first death is a death of the whole man, in so far as the soul, deprived of both God and the body, suffers a temporal punishment. The second death is one in which the soul, deprived of God but united to the body, suffers eternal punishment.

Therefore, when God, referring to the forbidden fruit, said to the first man whom He had established in Paradise: 'In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death,'[2] His threat included not only the first part of the first death, that is, the soul's deprivation of God; not only the second part of the first death, that is, the body's deprivation of the soul; not only the whole of the first death in which the soul, sepa-

1 Neglecting the *secunda* which appears in many MSS and is printed within brackets in the Hoffmann text.
2 Gen. 2.17.

rated from both God and the body, is punished; but whatever of death there is up to and including that absolutely final and so-called second death.

Chapter 13

As soon as our first parents had disobeyed God's commandment, they were immediately deprived of divine grace, and were ashamed of their nakedness. They covered themselves with fig leaves,[1] which, perhaps, were the first thing noticed by the troubled pair. The parts covered remained unchanged except that, previously, they occasioned no shame. They felt for the first time a movement of disobedience in their flesh, as though the punishment were meant to fit the crime of their own disobedience to God.

The fact is that the soul, which had taken perverse delight in its own liberty and disdained the service of God, was now deprived of its original mastery over the body; because it had deliberately deserted the Lord who was over it, it no longer bent to its will the servant below it, being unable to hold the flesh completely in subjection as would always have been the case, if only the soul had remained subject to God. From this moment, then, the flesh began to lust against the spirit.[2] With this rebellion we are born, just as we are doomed to die and, because of the first sin, to bear, in our members and vitiated nature, either the battle with or defeat by the flesh.

Chapter 14

God, the Author of all natures but not of their defects,

1 Cf. Gen. 3.7-10.
2 Cf. Gal. 5.17.

created man good; but man, corrupt by choice and condemned by justice, has produced a progeny that is both corrupt and condemned. For, we all existed in that one man, since, taken together, we were the one man who fell into sin through the woman who was made out of him before sin existed. Although the specific form by which each of us was to live was not yet created and assigned, our nature was already present in the seed from which we were to spring. And because this nature has been soiled by sin and doomed to death and justly condemned, no man was to be born of man in any other condition.

Thus, from a bad use of free choice, a sequence of misfortunes conducts the whole human race, excepting those redeemed by the grace of God, from the original canker in its root to the devastation of a second and endless death.

Chapter 15

Since there is no mention of more than one death in the Scriptural passage: 'Thou shalt die the death,'[1] we should interpret it to mean that particular death which occurs when the life of the soul (which is God) abandons it. (The soul was not first deserted by God and so deserted Him, but it first deserted God, with the result that it was deserted by Him.[2] For, as regards man's evil, it is his will that comes first, but where his good is in question, it is the Creator's will that is responsible, both for creating him out of nothing and for restoring him to life after he had fallen, and was dead.) However, although we may take it that God intimated only this one death in the words: 'In what day soever thou shalt

1 Gen. 2.17.

2 . . . *non enim deserta est ut desereret, sed ut desereretur deseruit.*

eat of it, thou shalt die the death,'[3] by which He meant: 'In whatever day you shall leave me through disobedience I shall leave you without grace,'[4] nevertheless, the mention of this one death includes all the other deaths which were certainly to follow.

In so far as a rebellion of the flesh against the rebellious soul prompted our parents to cover their shame, they experienced one kind of death—God's desertion of the soul. It was this death which was intimated when God asked Adam, beside himself with fear and in hiding: 'Where art thou?'[5] not, of course, because God did not know the answer, but to scold Adam by reminding him that there really was nowhere that he could be, once God was not in him.

Then when the soul departed from Adam's body, wasted and worn out with old age, he experienced a second kind of death, one which God specified when He pronounced this sentence upon man: 'Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.'[6] Now, what I call the first death—that of the entire man—embraces these two deaths. Ultimately, it will be followed by a second one, unless, by God's grace, man is delivered from it.

The body of man would never return to the earth out of which it was formed unless it did so by its own death, which occurs when the soul, the life of the body, abandons it. Consequently, all Christians who really hold to the Catholic faith[7] believe that it is not by a law of nature that man is subject to bodily death—since God created for man an immortal nature—but as a just punishment for sin. For, it was in retribution for sin that God said to the man, in whose existence we all shared: 'Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.'

3 Gen. 2.17.
4 . . . *deseram vos per iustitiam.*
5 Gen. 3.9.
6 Gen. 3.19.
7 . . . *Christianos veraciter catholicam tenentes fidem* . . .

Chapter 16

Some philosophers, against whose charges I am defending the City of God, that is to say, God's Church, seem to think it right to laugh at our doctrine that the separation of the soul and body is a punishment for the soul, whose beatitude, they think, will be perfect only when it returns to God simple, solitary, and naked, as it were, stripped of every shred of its body.

Now, if I could, in their own writings, find no refutation of this hypothesis, I would have to go to all the trouble of proving that it is not the body as such but only a corruptible body that is burdensome to the soul. That is why, as I quoted in a previous book,[1] our Scripture says: 'For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul.'[2] The additional word 'corruptible' makes it clear that the soul is weighed down not by the body as such, but by the body such as it has become as a consequence of sin and its punishment. And even if 'corruptible' had not been added, this text could have no other meaning.

The fact is, however, that Plato teaches, as plainly as can be, that the supreme God made the lesser gods with immortal bodies and promised to them the great boon of remaining forever in their own bodies, of which death would never deprive them. Why on earth, then, do these philosophers, for the sake of poking at the Christian faith, pretend not to know what they know full well, except that they would rather squabble and disagree among themselves than agree with us?

Just listen to the very words of Plato, as Cicero has translated them into Latin.[3] Plato is supposing that the supreme

1 Cf. above, 12.16.
2 Wisd. 9.15.
3 *Timaeus* 41A (in Cicero's *De universo* 11).

God is addressing the gods whom he has made: 'You who have sprung from seed of the gods, give ear. The works of which I am the parent and maker, these are imperishable as long as I will them to be, even though all else that has been put together can be taken apart. For, it can never be good even to think of putting asunder what reason has joined together. Since you have had a beginning, you cannot be immortal and indestructible; yet, by no means shall you ever suffer dissolution nor shall any decree of death destroy you, nor prevail over my determination which is a stronger pledge of your perpetuity than those bodies with which you were joined when you were brought into being.'

Thus, as you see, Plato teaches that the gods are mortal by virtue of their union of body and soul, and immortal by the will and decree of the God who made them. If it is a punishment for the soul to be bound to any body whatsoever, why does the supreme God speak to the inferior gods as if they were afraid they might die and be separated from their bodies? And why does He assure them of their immortality, promising it not as due to their nature (which is not simple), but as dependent on His unconquerable will which can save from any setting what has had a rising, from dissolution what was put together, and make what is corruptible continue forever?

Note that it is beside the point whether or not Plato is right in this conjecture about the stars. I shall merely say that we need not take his word for it, insistent as he is, that these globes or disks of physical light, whose rays illumine the earth whether by day or night, are animated by souls which are capable of thought and happiness, and that the entire universe is but one vast living mass containing within itself all other living creatures. As I have said, this is another question, and I have no intention of discussing it at present.

This much, however, I think needed to be said in the face of those who are so proud of being, or of being called, Platonists that they are ashamed to be Christians, afraid that to share this name with ordinary people might taint the title of philosopher which they are so proud to share with a coterie so exclusive. Ever on the lookout for something to tilt at in Christian doctrine, they violently assail our belief in the immortality of the body, pretending to see a contradiction in our double desire for the happiness of the soul and its permanence in a body to which, they imagine, it is bound by a chain of grief. They forget that their very founder and master, Plato, has taught that the supreme God had granted to the lesser gods, whom he had made, the favor of never dying, in the sense of never being separated from the bodies which he had united to them.

Chapter 17

Such Platonists, while protesting that no earthly body can be eternal, have no hesitation in proclaiming that our globe, which is the midmost member of their great though not supreme god, namely the god which is the universe, is itself eternal. Their supreme God, then, has made for them another god which they suppose divine, namely, this universe, which is superior to all other lesser gods, and which is a living creature, so they say, with a rational or intellectual soul, enclosed in its enormous and bulky body, the properly placed and distributed members of which are the four elements, indissolubly and eternally united, so that this great god, in their theory, may never die.

If, then, it is true that this earth—the central member in the body of a greater living creature—is eternal, why cannot

the bodies of other earthly living beings also be eternal, if God should so will it? Their answer is that earth must return to the earth from which the material bodies of all living creatures have been taken.[1] They explain that this is the reason why such creatures must necessarily die and be dissolved and so return to the solid and eternal earth from which they were created.

If anyone should use like logic in regard to the element of fire, arguing that bodies created from fire, in order to become celestial animals, must first be restored to the universal fire, then would not that immortality which Plato represents the supreme God as promising to such gods[2] vanish in the violence of this debate? Or is it that God's will alone—invincible, in Plato's theory—prevents this restoration to universal fire? If so, then what hinders God from acting in like manner with terrestrial bodies? For, Plato himself admits that God can bring it about that things which have a rising need not set, nor things bound together fall asunder, nor what is formed of the elements disintegrate, nor souls once established in bodies ever desert them—and, thus in union with their bodies, they can enjoy immortality and perpetual beatitude.

Why, then, cannot God see to it that terrestrial things do not die? Does His power not extend as far as the Christians believe it does, or does it end where the Platonists want it to end? Must we, really, assume that philosophers have been able to penetrate into the purpose and power of God, while the Prophets could not? The truth is just the opposite. While the Spirit of God taught His Prophets to declare His will, in so far as He deigned to reveal it, the philosophers, in search of this will, were deceived by human surmises.

Yet, even philosophers should not have been so misled by

1 Cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 3.25,29.
2 *Timaeus* 41A.

obstinacy added to ignorance as to fall into the open contradiction of first vehemently arguing that no soul can be blessed unless it escapes both the earthly and every other kind of a body, and then declaring there are gods whose souls are blessed and yet are bound to their eternal bodies—the gods in the sky with bodies of fire—while the soul of Jove—their name for the whole cosmos—is enclosed in every single element of matter in the cosmic mass which stretches from earth to heaven.[3]

Plato teaches that this soul of the universe flows, as it were, in rhythmic waves, and reaches from the middlemost point of the earth (its geometrical center) up through all space to the highest and farthest limits of heaven. Thus, for the Platonists, the cosmos is an immense, eternal, and utterly blessed living creature, whose soul, without abandoning its own body, enjoys the perfect happiness of wisdom, while its body is eternally alive by reason of the soul, and yet, in spite of being complex and composed of so many great masses of matter it cannot dull the soul or slow it down.

Since, then, these Platonists are so indulgent to their own suppositions, why do they refuse to believe that, by the will and power of God, even earthly bodies can be made immortal and that in these bodies, souls never separated by death nor ever burdened by their weight may live forever and in all felicity at least as well as their own gods can live in the bodies of fire and Jove, their king, in all the elements of matter. And if souls, in order to be blessed, must flee from every kind of body, then let their own gods flee from the starry spheres and let Jupiter escape from heaven and earth. Or, if that is beyond their powers, then let them be held to be unhappy.

Our philosophers, however, do not want to face either of

3 *Timaeus* 34B; 36E.

these alternatives: they do not dare to grant to their gods a separation from their bodies, for then it would seem that they were merely worshiping mortals; nor will they admit a privation of blessedness, for then they would have to acknowledge that their gods are miserable. To attain to blessedness, then, there is no need to be free of every kind of a body but only of those which are corruptible and irksome, burdensome and moribund, not such bodies as God, in His goodness, created for our first parents but only such as were imposed as a punishment for sin.

Chapter 18

Gravity, we are told, either holds earthly bodies on earth or compels them to fall, and, therefore, they cannot be in heaven. It is true that our first parents lived on earth in a wooded and fruitful land called Paradise. Nevertheless, the philosophers might well examine again the question of earthly gravity in the light either of the body of Christ with which He ascended into heaven or of the bodies of the saints as they will be in their resurrection.

If it is not beyond human skill to fashion floating vessels out of metals which sink as soon as they are put in water, can we not readily believe that the power of God, in some more effectual, if secret, manner, can free the earthly bodies of the saints in heaven from the law of gravity which pulls them toward earth and can give to the souls of the saints the power to rest or move their bodies, earthly as ever but now incorruptible, wherever they wish and with the utmost ease? After all, even Plato admits that the all-powerful will of God can save what is born from dying and what is composite from disintegration, and it is much more wonderful than any combina-

tion of bodies that spiritual realities can be united to material substances.

Again, when we read of angels carrying off creatures, of any kind, anywhere on earth, and depositing them wherever they please, have we no choice but to be skeptical, or else to believe that the angels feel the burden?[1] And since we have, why should we doubt that the souls in heaven, made perfect and blessed by the grace of the Divine Spirit, can carry and rest their own bodies wherever they choose and without a shadow of difficulty? In this connection, it may be observed that, although in general the greater the bulk of any material object we are carrying happens to be, the heavier it is, and though more things weigh heavier than fewer, nevertheless, when the body is our own and in in good health, our soul carries it as though it were lighter than when it has been reduced by illness. To anyone else who is carrying him, a stout and healthy man seems heavier than one who is thin and ailing, yet the man himself who carries and moves his own body does so with much more agility when, in good health, he weighs more than when his frame is weakened by disease or hunger. Thus, even when we have earthly bodies which are still mortal and corruptible, it is not so much the size and weight that matter but rather the condition of health. Now, just think of the inexpressible difference between what we now call health and our future immortality.

The philosophers, then, have no argument against our faith on the basis of the weight of the body. If I do not ask them why they deny that an earthly body can be in heaven when, as a matter of fact, the whole universe has nothing to hold it up, it is because they have a semblance of an answer

1 . . . *aut eos non posse aut onera sentire credendum est?* The suggested translation avoids the necessity of introducing *sine labore,* as the Maurists proposed.

by saying that, perhaps, the same law which attracts all heavy beings to the center holds the cosmic center in position. The point I want to make is this. If the lesser gods, in Plato's theory, the creators of all terrestrial animals including man, were able to remove from fire, as he says, its quality of burning, leaving only its brightness to shine through the eyes,[2] and, if the supreme God, by His power and will, can save things created from death, and things composed of such distinct and dissimilar parts as a material and spiritual substance from disintegration, then why should we hesitate to acknowledge that God can remove from the body of man, to which He has given immortality, its corruption, leaving its nature, harmonious form and features, but removing the hindrance of weight? However, at the end of this work,[3] God willing, I intend to discuss more fully our faith in the resurrection of the dead and their immortal bodies.

Chapter 19

For the present, I shall continue our discussion of the bodies of our first parents. If death had not followed as a just punishment for sin, Adam and Eve would never have experienced that death which is said to be good for the good and is familiar to everyone, not just to a coterie of Christians or philosophers, and which consists in the separation of soul and body and in virtue of which the body of an animal that was manifestly alive is now just as manifestly dead.

Now, undeniable as it is that the departed souls of good and holy people are now living in peace, it would still be so much better for them to be alive in their own bodies in good

2 *Timaeus* 42D; 45B.
3 Cf. below, 22.12.

health that even those who hold that it is beatitude to be utterly bodiless have to prove this opinion at the price of a lie in their souls.[1] For, there is not one of them who will dare to prefer philosophers, whether dead or about to die, that is, whether already or about to be bodiless, to those immortal gods to whom, according to Plato, the supreme God promises the munificent gift of an indissoluble life, that is to say, an eternal union with their bodies. Yet, the best prospects that Plato holds out even for men who have lived good and holy lives is that they are to be freed from their bodies only to be received into the arms of those very gods who never give up their own bodies,[2] and then, in Virgil's much admired expression of the Platonic idea,

> 'To see the earth and, heedless of what went before,
> Desire, in fleshly form, to live their lives once more.'[3]

Plato, in fact, does think that the souls of mortals can neither live forever with their bodies exempt from the inevitable disintegration of death nor, on the other hand, endure forever without their bodies, but must, by ceaseless alternations, pass from death to life and from life to death. He seems, however, to distinguish wise men from the rest of men in this, that, after death, the former are borne to the stars, there to linger a somewhat longer time, each in a star appropriate to himself, until, forgetful of former misery and conquered by the desire to possess once more a body, they return to the toils and tears of mortal men; whereas the others who have lived unwisely return almost at once to the bodies they deserve—whether human or animal.

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1 . . . *hanc opinionem suam sententia repugnante convincant.*
2 *Phaedro* 107C-108C; 246D-249D.
3 Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.750-751.

A hard fate, surely, for the souls of the good and the wise not to have allotted to them bodies in union with which they may live forever in time and eternity, for they can neither remain permanently with their bodies nor, without them, enjoy eternal purity. I have already remarked, in a previous book,[4] that, in Christian times, Porphyry became ashamed of this Platonic theory and proposed not only to free human souls from the bodies of beasts but so to liberate the souls of the wise from every bodily tie, that blessed souls, utterly disembodied, might remain forever with the Father. Not to be outdone by Christ, who had promised eternal life to the saints, Porphyry even proposed that purified souls should have eternal happiness with no return to their former miseries; but, to contradict Christ, he denied the resurrection of incorruptible bodies, maintaining that souls will live forever not only without earthly bodies but without any bodies whatsoever. However, not even in this doctrine, such as it was, did Porphyry go so far as to teach that gods with bodies are unworthy of religious rites, his only reason being that he did not believe that the souls of wise men, even when freed from their bodies, were superior to the embodied gods. Therefore, if these philosophers will not dare, as I presume they will not, to prefer human souls to the blessed gods established in eternal bodies, why do they ridicule our Christian teaching that the first parents were so created that, had they not sinned, they would never have been separated from their bodies by death, but, as a reward for their continued obedience, would have been endowed with immortality, in eternal union with their bodies; and that the saints, in the resurrection, will possess the identical bodies in which they labored here on earth, without corruption or rebellion of the flesh; and without any anguish or unhappiness in the soul to mar their eternal beatitude.

4 Cf. above, 10.30.

Chapter 20

Consequently, the souls of the faithful departed think lightly of the death which has separated them from their bodies, because their flesh is now resting in hope, whatever abuse it may have seemed to suffer once all feeling was gone. Nor do they desire that their bodies be forgotten, as Plato would have it, but rather, remembering what was promised to them by Him who cannot deceive and who has given them assurance that not even a hair of their head will be lost,[1] they look, with patient longing, for the resurrection of those bodies in which they suffered the many hardships which they are now to suffer no longer. If these holy souls did not hate their own flesh even when its foolish rebellion against reason had to be curbed by the law of the spirit, how much more do they love it now that it, too, is to become spiritual. For, as the spirit, when it serves the flesh, is not improperly said to be carnal, so the flesh, when it serves the spirit, will rightly be called spiritual—not because changed into spirit as some suppose who misinterpret the text, 'What is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body,'[2] but because it will be so subject to the spirit that, with a marvelous pliancy of perfect obedience, it will accept the infallible law of its indissoluble immortality, putting aside every feeling of fatigue, every shadow of suffering, every sign of slowing down. This 'spiritual body' will not only be better than any body on earth in perfect health but will surpass even that of Adam or Eve before their sin. For, although they were not destined to die unless they sinned, they needed food as all men do for bodies which were still earthly and animal and not yet spiritual. Although they did not advance with age toward inevitable death—from this,

1 Cf. Luke 21.18.
2 1 Cor. 15.44.

through a marvelous grace of God, they were saved by the tree of life which grew with the forbidden tree, in the middle of Paradise—yet, they took nourishment; and if they were forbidden to eat of that one tree, it was not because of any evil in the tree but for the sake of the value of a pure and simple obedience which is the great virtue of a rational creature subject to its Lord and Creator. For, of course, in a case where nothing that was evil was touched, but only something that was forbidden, the only sin was disobedience. Hence, the effect of the other food they took was to free their animal bodies from the feelings of hunger and thirst; but the purpose of tasting of the tree of life was to prevent death either from taking them by surprise or from overtaking them when they were worn out with old age and the passing of the years. It was as though other trees were meant for nourishment, while the tree of life was but a symbol or a sacrament, an outward sign in the visible Garden of that wisdom of God in the spiritual and invisible Paradise, of which Scripture says: 'She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her.'[3]

Chapter 21

For this reason, there are some who have allegorized the entire Garden of Eden where, according to Holy Scripture, the first parents of the human race actually lived. The trees and fruit-bearing shrubs are turned into symbols of virtues and ways of living, as though they had no visible and material reality and as if Scripture had no purpose but to express meanings for our minds. The assumption here is that the possibility of a spiritual meaning rules out the reality of a physical Paradise. That is like saying that Agar and Sara, the

3 Prov. 3.18.

mothers of the two sons of Abraham, 'the one by a slave-girl and the other by a free woman,'[1] had no historical existence simply because the Apostle has said that 'by way of allegory . . . these are the two covenants';[2] or that Moses struck no rock nor did water actually flow[3] simply because the story can also be read as an allegory of Christ, as the same Apostle does read it: 'but the rock was Christ.'[4]

There is no reason, then, for anyone forbidding us to see in the Garden, symbolically, the life of the blessed; in its four rivers, the four virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice; in its trees, all useful knowledge; in the fruits of the trees, the holy lives of the faithful; in the tree of life, that wisdom which is the mother of all good; and in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the experience that results from disobedience to a command of God. The punishment which God imposed on the sinners was just and, therefore, good in itself, but not for man who experienced the taste of it.

This account can be even better read as an allegory of the Church, prophetical of what was to happen in the future. Thus, the Garden is the Church itself, as we can see from the Canticle of Canticles;[5] the four rivers are the four Gospels; the fruit-bearing trees are the saints, as the fruits are their works; and the tree of life is, of course, the Saint of saints, Christ; and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the free choice of our own will. For, if a man disdains the divine will, he can only use his own to his own destruction, and, thus, he comes to the knowledge of the difference between obedience to the good common to all and indulgence in a good proper to oneself. For, anyone who loves himself is left to him-

1 Gal. 4.22.
2 Gal. 4.24.
3 Exod. 17.6; Num. 20.11.
4 1 Cor 10.4.
5 Cant. 4.12.

self until, filled with fears and tears, he cries out, if he has any sensitivity to his own sufferings, like the psalmist: 'My soul is troubled within myself,'[6] so that, when he has learned his lesson, he may cry: 'I will keep my strength to thee.'[7]

No one should object to such reflections and others even more appropriate that might be made concerning the allegorical interpretation of the Garden of Eden, so long as we believe in the historical truth manifest in the faithful narrative of these events.

Chapter 22

So, then, the bodies of the saints, such as they will be in the resurrection, will have no need of the fruit from any tree to save them from dying of any ailment or inveterate old age, nor will they have need of other material food or drink to protect them against the pangs of hunger or the pain of thirst, for the saints will be robed in bodies so adorned with the certain and utterly inviolable gift of immortality that they will feel no need to eat, although able to do so if they choose.

The same is true of angels who have been in visible communication with men. They had no need to eat, but, whenever the courtesy of their ministry[1] called for it, they both could and would conform to the ways of men. Nor must we suppose that, when entertained by men, angels ate in appearance only, even though they seemed, to those unaware that they were angels, to be taking nourishment out of the same necessity that we do. This is the point of the remark of the angel in the Book of Tobias: 'You saw me eat but you saw

6 Ps. 58.10.
7 *Ibid.*

1 . . . *sui ministerii quadam humanitate, fecerunt.*

it with your own vision,'[2] meaning, you thought I took food, as you do, through a need of refreshing my body.

Perhaps, in the case of the angels, a different opinion can be defended as more credible. However, in regard to our Saviour Himself, the Christian faith leaves us in no doubt. The fact is that even after the resurrection, when His body was already spiritual, yet no less real, our Lord took food and drink together with His disciples.[3] It is not the feeding as such but the needing[4] to eat and drink that will be taken away from bodies such as these. They will become spiritual not by desisting from being bodies but by subsisting[5] in virtue of a life-giving spirit.

Chapter 23

As bodies which are still united to a living soul, though not to a life-giving spirit, are said to be animal bodies, yet are not souls,[1] but only bodies, so the bodies are said to be spiritual,[2] yet are not to become spirits—God defend us from such a belief—but will still be bodies, so vivified by the spirit, however, as to retain the substance of flesh without suffering the accidents of sluggishness and mortality.

When that day comes, man will be not earthy but heavenly, not because his earth-made body will not remain the same, but because a heavenly gift will have so changed its quality, without destroying its nature, as to make it fit for habitation in heaven. 'The first man of the earth, earthy, became a

2 Cf. Tob. 12.19.
3 Luke 24.42,43.
4 *Non enim potestas sed egestas edendi . . .*
5 . . . *desistent . . . subsistent.*

1 . . . *animalia . . . animae . . .*
2 1 Cor. 15.44.

living soul,'[3] but not a life-giving spirit. This was reserved for him as a reward for obedience.

Adam's body, then, had need of food and drink to stave off hunger and thirst; and it was not by reason of any absolute and indissoluble immortality, but in virtue of the tree of life, that it was preserved in the flower of youth and freed from the necessity of death, for, undoubtedly, it was a natural and not a spiritual body. Yet it would never, in fact, have died had not Adam by his disobedience incurred the punishment which God had threatened and foretold. Even when driven out of Paradise, Adam was not denied nourishment, but was forbidden to eat of the tree of life and so was doomed to die from age and senility—only, however, in regard to the life of that natural body which, had he not sinned, would have become spiritual as a reward for this obedience, and in which life in the Garden could have continued unendingly.

So, even if we understand that the manifest death which is the separation of soul from body was implied in the words of God: 'For the day you eat of it, you must die,'[4] it need not surprise us that the souls of our first parents were not severed from their bodies on the very day they ate the forbidden and death-dealing food. It was surely enough that on that day their nature became defective and was changed for the worse, and that, by being justly deprived of the tree of life, they became subject to that necessity of bodily death, which is now for us innate.

For this reason, the Apostle did not say: 'The body will indeed die because of sin,' but rather: 'The body, it is true, is dead by reason of sin, but the spirit is life by reason of justification.'[5] Then he added: 'But if the Spirit of him who

3 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.45,47.
4 Gen. 2.17.
5 Rom. 8.10,11.

raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you.' The body, therefore, will then be united to a life-giving spirit, whereas now it is united to a living soul. Even so, the Apostle calls it 'dead' because it is bound by the necessity of dying. But, originally in Paradise, the body, while not united to a life-giving spirit, was so united to a living soul that it could not properly be called dead, because it could incur the necessity of dying only by committing sin.

Now, since God, when He said to Adam: 'Where art thou?'[6] implied the death of the soul, which resulted when God abandoned it, and since, when He said: 'Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return,'[7] He alluded to the death of the body, which results when the soul departs from it, we are led to believe that the reason for making no reference to the second death was because He willed this to be kept secret in view of the dispensation of the New Testament in which it is clearly revealed. Thus, at first, only the first death, which is common to all, was to be revealed as a penalty of that sin which was committed by one man but has become common to us all; whereas, the second death is certainly not common to all because, as the Apostle says, those are excepted 'who according to his purpose, are saints through his call. For those whom he has foreknown he has also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the first born among many brethren.'[8] These saints, the grace of God, through Christ our Mediator, has delivered from the second death.

This, then, is the Apostle's way of telling us that the first

6 Gen. 3.10.
7 Gen. 3.19.
8 Rom. 8.28,29.

man was created with a natural body. Wishing to distinguish this natural body, which exists in time, from the spiritual one, which is to follow in the resurrection, he says: 'What is sown in corruption rises in incorruption; what is sown in dishonor rises in glory; what is sown in weakness rises in power; what is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body.'[9] And then, as though in proof, he continues: 'If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.' To explain what a natural body is, he adds: 'So also it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living soul.' In this way, he wished to make clear what a natural body is, even though when Scripture is narrating that the first man, Adam, was created by the breath of God, it does not say: 'man became a living body,' but: 'man became a living soul.' So, then, in the text, 'The first man became a living soul,' the Apostle meant us to take the words 'living soul' to mean that 'natural body' of man.

He also shows what is meant by the spiritual body, when he adds: 'The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.' Here, undoubtedly, he signifies Christ who has so risen from the dead that He can die no more. And the Apostle follows this up by saying: 'But it is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the spiritual.' Here it is more clear than ever that he understands as the 'natural body' what Scripture calls a 'living soul' in the text, 'the first man became a living soul,' and that he means the 'spiritual body' when he says: 'the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.'

First, then, comes the natural body such as Adam was the first man to possess, but which, had he not sinned, would never have died; such, too, as we possess, except that its nature as a result of sin has become so changed for the worse that now it is faced with inexorable death; such a body, also, as

9 1 Cor. 15.42-47.

even Christ, as first, deigned to assume for our sakes, not indeed by necessity but in virtue of His power.

Afterwards, however, comes the spiritual body such as that which Christ, our Head, was the first to have, but which we, His members, will have at the final resurrection of the dead.

Then the Apostle, pointing out a very obvious difference between these two men, adds: 'The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven, heavenly. As was the earthy man, such also are the earthy; and as is the heavenly man, such also are the heavenly. Therefore, even as we have borne the likeness of the earthy, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly.'[10] What the Apostle here has in mind is that even now something like this can be wrought by the sacrament of regeneration. So, elsewhere, he says: 'For all you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.'[11] Not merely in symbol but in fact this will be accomplished when our body, which is natural by its birth, shall have become spiritual by its resurrection.[12] For, to quote the Apostle again: 'In hope were we saved.'[13]

Now, as we bear the likeness of the earthly man because of the inheritance of sin and death which we have received through generation, so, too, we bear the likeness of the heavenly man because of the grace of forgiveness and of life eternal, that is to say, because of the regeneration which is possible only through the 'Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.'[14] It is He whom the Apostle wishes us to understand as the heavenly man because He came down from heaven to be clothed with an earthly and a mortal

10 1 Cor. 15.47-49.
11 Gal. 3.27.
12 . . . *quod est animale* nascendo *spiritale factum fuerit* resurgendo.
13 Rom. 8.24.
14 1 Tim. 2.5.

body in order that later He might clothe it with a heavenly immortality. If the Apostle calls other men heavenly it is only because, by grace, they become Christ's members, so that with them He may be one as a head and a body are one.

In the same Epistle, Paul expresses this thought more clearly: 'For since by a man came death, by a man also comes resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made to live,'[15] that is, in a spiritual body which will become a life-giving spirit. This does not mean that all who die in Adam will be members of Christ, since the majority will be punished in eternity by a second death; the Apostle uses the word 'all' in both clauses because as no one dies in a natural body except in Adam, so no one is made to live again in a spiritual body except in Christ.

We are by no means to conclude that in the resurrection we shall have bodies such as the first man had before he sinned, nor that the words, 'As was the earthy man, such also are the earthy,' are to be understood in reference to that which resulted from the committing of sin. In other words, we are not to believe that, before his fall, Adam possessed a spiritual body which, in punishment for sin, was changed afterwards to a natural one. Anyone who can believe that must have paid but slight attention to the words of the great teacher who says: 'If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written: The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' This most certainly did not take place after his sin, for is was precisely in reference to the first condition of man that the blessed Paul selected this text of Scripture in order to explain what a natural body is.

15 1 Cor. 15.21,22.

Chapter 24

By not reflecting sufficiently on the text: 'God breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul,'[1] some have supposed that it means, not that a soul was then bestowed on the first man, but that the soul which he already possessed was vivified by the Holy Spirit. Their argument is that, after He had risen from the dead, the Lord Jesus breathed upon His disciples, saying: 'Receive the Holy Spirit,'[2] and that what took place in one case took place in the other; so that the Evangelist might well have gone on to say: 'And they became living souls.'

But, even if the Evangelist had said this, we certainly would have interpreted his words to mean that the Spirit of God is that kind of life of the soul without which rational souls must be considered dead although their living bodies are present before us. This, however, is not what took place when man was created, as the words of Scripture clearly prove: 'Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground.'[3] Hoping to make the meaning clearer, some have thought that the words should be translated: 'And God fashioned man from the slime of the earth,' since the preceding verse in the text reads: 'A mist rose from the earth and watered all the surface of the ground.'[4] Their point is that 'slime' must here be understood, since it is a mixture of moisture and soil.

This text, according to the Greek manuscripts from which it has been translated into Latin, is followed immediately by the words: 'Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground.' Whether *formavit* or *finxit* is the better Latin rendering for the Greek, *éplasen,* makes no real dif-

1 Gen. 2.7.
2 John. 20.22.
3 Gen. 2.7.
4 Gen. 2.6.

ference, although *finxit* is, in fact, the better word. It was to avoid any ambiguity that some preferred *formavit*. The only trouble with *fingere* is that, as the word is commonly used, it means rather to 'make up a fiction' than to make something real.

This first man, then, who was formed from the dust of the earth or from slime (since the dust was moistened dust), this 'dust of the earth,' to use the exact expression of Scripture, became a living body when he received a soul, according to the Apostle's words: 'And this man became a living soul.'

But, it is objected, Adam had a soul already for, otherwise, he would not have been called a man, since a man is not a body only nor a soul only but a being consisting of the two. Now, it is true that the soul is not the entire man, but only his better part; nor is the body the entire man, but merely his inferior part. Only when body and soul are in union can we speak of a man. However, either part, even when it is mentioned separately, can be used for a man, for in everyday speech no one can be blamed for saying 'That man is dead and is now in peace or in pain'—although this can be said strictly only of his soul. We also say: 'That man is buried in such or such a place'—although this applies only to his body. Perhaps they will protest that such a manner of speaking is contrary to the usage of Holy Scripture. On the contrary, Scripture is so much on our side in this matter that, even when referring to a man who is still alive with body and soul united, it calls either part a man, meaning by 'the inner man' his soul and by 'the outer man' his body,[5] almost as if there were two men, although both together make but one man.

What we need to understand is how a man can be called, on the one hand, the image of God and, on the other, is dust and will return to dust. The former relates to the rational soul which God by His breathing or, better, by His inspiration

5 Cf. 2 Cor. 4.16.

communicated to man, meaning to the body of man; but the latter refers to the body such as God formed it from dust into the man to whom a soul was given that it might become a living body, that is, that man might become a living soul. But, what our Lord wanted us to understand when He breathed on His disciples, saying: 'Receive the Holy Spirit,' was that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit not only of the Father but also the Spirit of the Only-begotten Son Himself. For, in fact, one and the same Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son—not a creature but the Creator, and forming with them the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not, of course, that the physical breath issuing from His actual mouth was the very substance and nature of the Holy Spirit; rather, it was a sign by which we are to understand, as I have said, that the Holy Spirit is common to both the Father and the Son, since neither has His own individual Spirit but both have the same Spirit.

However, the Greek text of Holy Scripture always calls this Spirit *pneuma,* the name our Lord here used in giving Him to His disciples under the symbol of the breath which issued from His mouth. And throughout Holy Scripture I have not seen the Spirit called by any other name. Certainly, in the verse: 'And God formed man out of the dust of the ground and blew or breathed into his face the breath of life,' the Greek text does not give *pneuma,* the usual word for the Holy Spirit, but *pnoé,* a word used more frequently of the creature than of the Creator. Because of this distinction, some have preferred to translate this word not by the Latin *spiritus* but by *flatus.*

This word, *pnoé,* occurs also in Greek text of Isaias in which God says: 'I have made every breathing,'[6] meaning, undoubtedly, every soul. And so our translators have renedered the Greek *pnoé* in various ways: sometimes as breathing,

6 Cf. Isa. 57.16.

sometimes as spirit, and sometimes as inspiration or aspiration even when it refers to God. However, their only interpretation for *pneuma* is spirit, whether it is the spirit of man of which the Apostle says: 'For who among men knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him?'[7] or the 'spirit of beasts' referred to in the Book of Solomon: 'Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beasts descend downward?'[8] or that material spirit, the wind, as it is called in the psalm: 'Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds,'[9] or, finally, the Spirit which is uncreated, the Creator-Spirit indicated by our Lord in the following words of the Gospel: 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (the Spirit being symbolized by the breath which issued from our Lord's mouth); 'Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'[10]—a clear and perfect expression of the Trinity itself; and in the phrase, 'God is Spirit,'[11] and many other places in Holy Scripture. In fact, in all these Scriptural texts we find, in Greek, *pneuma* not *pnoé*, and, in Latin, *spiritus* not *flatus*.

And so, even if in the verse, 'He blew' or better 'He breathed into his face the breath of life,' the Greek text had not used *pnoé*, as it has, but *pneuma*, if would not follow that we would have to interpret it as the Creator-Spirit, who in respect to the Trinity is properly called the Holy Spirit, since, as I have already said, it is manifest that *pneuma* is often used to indicate the spirit of the creature as well as that of the Creator.

The objection, however, is raised that, since Sacred Scripture used the word 'spirit,' the expression 'of life' would not have been added except to indicate the Holy Spirit, nor in

7 1 Cor. 2.11.
8 Eccle. 3.21.
9 Ps. 148.8.
10 Cf. Matt. 28.19.
11 John 4.24.

the text, 'man became a soul,' would Scripture have inserted 'living' save to signify that life of the soul which is a divine gift bestowed by the Spirit of God. For, since the soul, so the argument runs, lives by its own mode of life, there was no necessity of supplying the word 'living' unless the life meant were the life which is imparted to the soul by the Holy Spirit. Now, what does such reasoning reveal but a careful contention for the notions of man and a careless attention to the words of God.[12]

In the very same book, without too much trouble, anyone could have read a previous text: 'Let the earth bring forth the living soul,'[13] which refers to all the terrestrial animals that were then created. Then, a little further on in the same book, one could just as easily have noticed the verse: 'And all things wherein there is the breath of life on the earth, died,'[14] which means that everything which lived on the earth perished in the flood.

Thus we find that Holy Scripture is accustomed to use both phrases—'living soul' and 'the breath of life'—in regard even to beasts, and in the verse, 'All things wherein there is the breath of life,' the Greek text does not use the word *pneuma* but *pnoé*. Hence, the only real question here is: What need was there to add 'living,' since the soul cannot exist without being alive? Or what need was there to add 'of life' after the word 'breath'? The answer to this question is that Scripture regularly uses the terms 'living soul' and 'breath of life' to signify animals or animated bodies that are clearly capable of sensation on account of a soul, but, on the contrary, when there was a question of the creation of man, the ordinary usage of Holy Scripture is forgotten. There is now

12 *Hoc quid est aliud nisi* diligenter *pro humana suspicione* contendere *et scripturas sanctas* neglegenter adtendere.
13 Cf. Gen. 1.24.
14 Gen. 7.22.

an altogether special mode of expression which is meant to imply that when man was created he received in addition a rational soul not produced from water and earth like the souls of other animals, but created by the breath of God, and that, nevertheless, man was so made as to live, just like the other animals, in an animal body, but in one which is animated by a human soul. It was of the other animals that Scripture says: 'Let the earth bring forth the living soul,' and likewise says of this animal soul that it has the 'breath of life.' That is why the Greek text does not use the word *pneuma* but *pnoé,* the word that was needed to make clear that is was not the Holy Spirit that was meant, but an animal soul.

Another objection is that what issued from the mouth of God must be understood as the breath of God and that, if we take this breath to be the soul, then logically we must acknowledge that the soul is equal to and consubstantial with that Wisdom which says: 'I came out of the mouth of the most High.'[15] The answer is that Wisdom does not say that it was breathed out of the mouth of God but that it proceeded therefrom. Notice that with man it is not out of our nature by which we are men that we make a breathing when we breathe but out of the surrounding air which we first inhale and then exhale, whereas with Almighty God it is neither out of His nature nor out of any creature subject to Him but out of absolutely nothing that He was able to create a breath which was so introduced into the body of man that the action is most appropriately indicated by a verb like 'inspire' or 'breathe' or 'blow into.' God, who is both immaterial and immutable, breathed a breath which was immaterial yet mutable, since the breath was created, whereas God is uncreated.

15 Eccli. 24.5.

Of course, it is not only what is consubstantial with God that is said to proceed from His mouth. If those who want to discuss Scripture but have overlooked the words of Scripture care to learn this truth, let them hear or read the text in which God says: 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth.'[16]

There is no reason, then, for any of us to raise such objections, since the Apostle speaks so clearly. He distinguishes the natural from the spiritual body, that is, the body in which we now are from that in which we are one day to be. His words are: 'What is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So, also, it is written: "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven, heavenly. As was the earthy man, such also are the earthy; and as is the heavenly man, such also are the heavenly. Therefore, even as we have borne the likeness of the earthy, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly.'[17]

In a previous chapter I have discussed all these words of the Apostle.[18] We saw that the natural body, to use the Apostle's expression, in which the first man, Adam, was created was not so created that under no conditions could it die, but in such a way that it would not die unless man sinned. But the body which, by the life-giving spirit, will become spiritual and immortal will under no conditions be able to die. It will be immortal, just as a created soul is immortal, for, even though a soul can be said to be dead when sin deprives it of that special kind of life which is the Spirit of God that could

16 Apoc. 3.16.
17 1 Cor. 15.44-49.
18 Cf. above, 13.23.

have enabled the soul to live wisely and blessedly, nevertheless, even in sin the soul does not cease to live, however miserably, a life of its own, because it is immortal by creation. So, too, the rebel angels, by reason of their sin, have died in the sense that, in abandoning God, they gave up the fountain of life which had enabled them to live in wisdom and blessedness. However, they could not die in the sense of ceasing to live and to feel, since they, too, were created immortal. That is why, even when the final judgment hurls them into a second death, they will not be wholly dead, for they will never lack the sense of the pains they are to suffer.

On the other hand, men who are sharers in the grace of God and fellow citizens with the holy angels abiding in Beatitude will be so clothed with spiritual bodies as to be saved forever from sin and death. Yet, while invested with an immortality like the angels' which can never be lost by sin, the nature of their flesh will remain the same, without a trace, however, of any remnant of corruption or clumsiness.

Here, however, a question arises, which it is necessary to discuss and, with the help of the Lord, the God of truth, to solve. It is true that passion sprang up in the rebellious members of our first parents as soon as their sin of disobedience deprived them of divine grace. That is why their eyes were opened to their nakedness in the sense that they became more curious about it and more concerned to cover their shame because a shameful rebellion of the flesh was resisting the control of their will. But what, then, would have urged them to beget children had they remained sinless as they were when created?

However, it is high time to put an end to this Book; besides, the topic is too large for summary treatment. I shall, therefore, defer this discussion to the following Book.

BOOK FOURTEEN

Chapter 1

I HAVE ALREADY SAID, in previous Books, that God had two purposes in deriving all men from one man. His first purpose was to give unity to the human race by the likeness of nature. His second purpose was to bind mankind by the bond of peace, through blood relationship, into one harmonious whole. I have said further that no member of this race would ever have died had not the first two—one created from nothing and the second from the first—merited this death by disobedience. The sin which they committed was so great that it impaired all human nature—in this sense, that the nature has been transmitted to posterity with a propensity to sin and a necessity to die. Moreover, the kingdom of death so dominated men that all would have been hurled, by a just punishment, into a second and endless death had not some been saved from this by the gratuitous grace of God. This is the reason why, for all the difference of the many and very great nations throughout the world in religion and morals, language, weapons, and dress, there exist no more than the two kinds of society, which, according to our Scriptures, we have rightly called the two cities. One city is that of men who live according to the flesh. The other is of men who live according to the spirit. Each of them chooses its own kind of peace and, when they attain what they desire, each lives in the peace of its own choosing.

Chapter 2

Our immediate task, then, must be to see what it means to live, first, according to the flesh and, second, according to the spirit. It would be a mistake for anyone to take what I have said at face value and without recalling or sufficiently considering the manner of speech used in Holy Scripture, imagining that it is the Epicurean philosophers who live according to the flesh simply because they place man's highest good in material pleasure. The same might be thought of any others who, in one way or another, think that the good of the body is man's highest good. So, too, of that great mass of men who do not dogmatize or philosophize about it but who are so inclined to sensuality that they cannot enjoy anything unless they can experience it with their senses. It would be no less a mistake to imagine, because the Stoics place man's highest good in the soul (and because 'soul' and 'spirit' mean the same), that, therefore, it is the Stoics who live according to the spirit. The fact is the language of Sacred Scripture clearly proves that both of these classes live according to the flesh. Scripture uses the word flesh not only in reference to the body of an earthly and mortal animal, but also to man, that is, to human nature. We have an example of the former in the words: 'All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of birds, another of fishes';[1] but it often uses the word flesh, with many other meanings, to denote man himself. In this case, the 'body' of man is used in the sense of a part for the whole, as for example: 'For by the works of the Law, no flesh shall be justified.'[2] What Scripture means here is 'no man.' In fact, a little further on, it says more plainly: 'By the Law no man is justified before

1 1 Cor. 15.39.
2 Rom. 3.20.

God.'[3] And in the Epistle to the Galatians, we read: 'But we know that man is not justified by the works of the Law.'[4] In this sense we understand the expression, 'And the Word was made flesh'[5]—that is, man. It was a misunderstanding of the meaning here that led some to think that Christ had no human soul. In the same way, the whole is used for a part in the words of Mary Magdalene in the Gospel, when she says: 'They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him';[6] here, Scripture was speaking only of the body of Christ, which was buried and which she thought had been taken away from the tomb. In the same way, a part is used for the whole when the entire man is understood from the term flesh, as in these extracts quoted above.

Sacred Scripture, then, uses the word flesh in so many meanings that it would be tedious to assemble and examine them all. However, if we wish to investigate what it means to 'live according to the flesh'—remembering that such living is sinful, although flesh is not by nature evil—we should carefully consider a passage in the Epistle which Paul the Apostle wrote to the Galatians: 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and suchlike. And concerning these I warn you, as I have warned you, that they who do such things will not attain the kingdom of God.'[7] If we reflect upon this whole text from the apostolic Epistle, in relation to the point of issue, we shall discover that it is all we need to determine what it means

3 Gal. 3.11.
4 Gal. 2.16.
5 John 1.14.
6 John 20.13.
7 Gal. 5.19-21.

to live according to the flesh. In the works of the flesh which St. Paul said were manifest and which he enumerated and condemned, we find, of course, those which pertain to carnal pleasures, such as immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, drunkenness, carousings, but we also find others, not related to the gratification of the body, which give evidence of the vices of the soul. It is clear enough to everyone that idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies are vices of the soul rather than of the body. For it is possible for a person to abstain from bodily indulgence by reason of idolatry or some heretical error. Such a person may seem to be subduing and curbing the desires of the flesh, yet even then he is guilty (according to this same apostolic authority) of living according to the flesh; the very fact that he is refraining from the pleasures of the flesh is the proof that he is performing detestable works of the flesh. If a man entertains enmity, does he not entertain it in his mind? No one would say to any enemy—real or imagined —'You show a bad flesh toward me.' He would say: 'Your mind is ill-disposed to me.' Finally, just as any one who hears of sins of carnality (if I may use the word) immediately attributes them to the flesh, so no one doubts that sins of animosity belong to the mind. Why, then, does the Doctor of the Gentiles say that all such vices are, in faith and in fact, works of the flesh? His only reason is that by his figurative use of a part for the whole he wants us to interpret the word 'flesh' as meaning the whole of human nature.

Chapter 3

Should anyone say that the cause of vices and evil habits lies in the flesh because it is only when the soul is influenced

by the flesh that it lives then in such a manner, he cannot have sufficiently considered the entire nature of man. It is true that 'the corruptible body is a load upon the soul.'[1] But notice that the Apostle who, in discussing the corruptible body, had used the words, 'Even though our outer man is decaying,'[2] goes on, a little further, to declare: 'For we know that if the earthly house in which we dwell be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made by human hands, eternal in the heavens. And indeed, in this present state we groan, yearning to be clothed over with that dwelling of ours which is from heaven; if indeed we shall be found clothed, and not naked. For we who are in this tent sigh under our burden, because we do not wish to be unclothed, but rather clothed over, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.'[3]

On the one hand, our corruptible body may be a burden on our soul; on the other hand, the cause of this encumbrance is not in the nature and substance of the body, and, therefore, aware as we are of its corruption, we do not desire to be divested of the body but rather to be clothed with its immortality. In immortal life we shall have a body, but it will no longer be a burden since it will no longer be corruptible. Now, however, 'the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things.'[4] Yet, it is an error to suppose that all the evils of the soul proceed from the body.

Virgil, it is true, seems to express a different idea, following Plato in his luminous lines:

1 Wisd. 9.15.
2 2 Cor. 4.16.
3 2 Cor. 5.1-4.
4 Wisd. 9.15.

'A fiery vigor of celestial birth
Endows these seeds so slowed by weight of earth
Or body's drag; and so they ever lie
In bondage to dull limbs that one day die.'[5]

And, as if he wanted us to believe that the four most common emotions of the soul—desire, fear, joy, and sadness—which are the causes of all sins and vices, spring from the body, he continues with the verse:

'Thus do they fear and hope, rejoice and grieve,
Blind in the gloomy jail they cannot leave.'

So Virgil. Our faith teaches something very different. For the corruption of the body, which is a burden on the soul, is not the cause but the punishment of Adam's first sin. Moreover, it was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful; on the contrary, it was the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible. Though some incitements to vice and vicious desires are attributable to the corruption of the flesh, nevertheless, we should not ascribe to the flesh all the evils of a wicked life. Else, we free the Devil from all such passions, since he has no flesh. It is true that the Devil cannot be said to be addicted to debauchery, drunkenness, or any others of the vices which pertain to bodily pleasure—much as he secretly prompts and provokes us to such sins—but he is most certainly filled with pride and envy. It is because these passions so possessed the Devil that he is doomed to eternal punishment in the prison of the gloomy air.

It is true that the Apostle attributes to the flesh (which Satan certainly does not possess) those vices which dominate

5 *Aeneid* 6.730-734.

the Devil. He says, in fact, that 'enmities,' 'contentions,' 'jealousies,' 'anger,' and 'quarrels' are the works of the flesh, whereas the origin of all these evils is pride—a vice which rules over the Devil who has no flesh. For, who is a worse enemy to the saints than he? Who is more contentious toward them, more wrathful, jealous, and quarrelsome?

Now, since the Devil has all of these vices but has no flesh, they can only be the works of the flesh in the sense that they are the works of man. Actually as I have mentioned, Paul often refers to man under the name of 'flesh.' It was not by reason of the flesh—which the Devil does not possess—but by reason of a man's desire to live according to himself, that is, according to man, that man made himself like the Devil. For, the Devil wished to live according to himself when he did not abide in the truth. So that, when he told a lie, it was not of God's doing but of his own, for the Devil is not only a liar but is also 'the father of lies.'[6] This means that he was the first liar. Lying began with him, as all sin began with him.

Chapter 4

When a man lives 'according to man' and not 'according to God' he is like the Devil. For, even an angel had to live according to God and not according to an angel if he were to remain steadfast in the truth, speaking the truth out of God's grace and not lying out of his own weakness. The same Apostle elsewhere says of man: 'Yet if God's truth has abounded through my lie.'[1] Notice that he says 'my lie' and 'God's truth.' So, then, when a man lives according to truth,

6 John 8.44.

1 Cf. Rom. 3.7.

he lives not according to himself but according to God. For it was God who said: 'I am the truth.'[2]

When man lives according to himself, that is to say, according to human ways and not according to God's will, then surely he lives according to falsehood. Man himself, of course, is not a lie, since God who is his Author and Creator could not be the Author and Creator of a lie. Rather, man has been so constituted in truth that he was meant to live not according to himself but to Him who made him—that is, he was meant to do the will of God rather than his own. It is a lie not to live as a man was created to live.

Man indeed desires happiness even when he does so live as to make happiness impossible. What could be more of a lie than a desire like that? This is the reason why every sin can be called a lie. For, when we choose to sin, what we want is to get some good or get rid of something bad. The lie is in this, that what is done for our good ends in something bad, or what is done to make things better ends by making them worse. Why this paradox, except that the happiness of man can come not from himself but only from God, and that to live according to oneself is to sin, and to sin is to lose God? When, therefore, we said that two contrary and opposing cities arose because some men live according to the flesh and other live according to the spirit, we could equally well have said that they arose because some live according to man and others according to God. St. Paul says frankly to the Corinthians: 'Since there are jealousy and strife among you, are you not carnal, and walking as mere men?'[3] Thus, to walk as a mere man is the same as to be carnal, for by 'flesh,' taking a part for the whole, a man is meant.

Notice that those very men whom the Apostle designates

2 John 14.6.
3 1 Cor. 3.3.

as carnal he had previously called animal, as in the text: 'Who among men knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the things of God no one knows but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God, that we may know the things that have been given us by God. These things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in the learning of the spirit, combining spiritual with spiritual. But the animal man does not perceive the things that are of the spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him.'[4] It is to these same 'animal' men that he later says: 'And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men but only as carnal.'[5]

In both cases we have the same figure of speech, using a part for the whole. For, either the soul or the flesh, which are the parts of man, can be used for the whole, that is, to mean man. Thus the animal man is not one thing and the carnal another, but both are one and the same, namely, man living according to man. So, too, it is men who are meant in the following texts: 'By the works of the Law no human flesh shall be justified'[6] and 'seventy-five souls went down into Egypt with Jacob.'[7] In one passage, 'no flesh' means 'no man'; in the other, 'seventy-five souls' means seventy-five men. Moreover, in the text, 'not in words taught by human wisdom,' 'carnal wisdom' could have been used, just as in the text, 'you walk according to man,' 'according to the flesh' could have been said. This fact appears more apparent as the Apostle continues: 'Whenever one says, "I am of Paul" but another "I am of Apollos," are you not mere man?'[8] What

4 1 Cor. 2.11-14.
5 1 Cor. 3.1.
6 Cf. Rom. 3.20.
7 Cf. Gen. 46.27.
8 1 Cor. 3.4.

he had implied by the expressions 'you are animal' and 'you are carnal,' he now states more clearly in the words 'you are men'—that is to say, 'You are living according to the ways of men not according to the will of God, for if you lived according to Him you would be gods.'

Chapter 5

We ought not, therefore, to blame our sins and defects on the nature of the flesh, for this is to disparage the Creator. The flesh, in its own kind and order, is good. But what is not good is to abandon the Goodness of the Creator in pursuit of some created good, whether by living deliberately according to the flesh, or according to the soul, or according to the entire man, which is made up of soul and flesh and which is the reason why either 'soul' alone or 'flesh' alone can mean a man.

Anyone, then, who extols the nature of the soul as the highest good and condemns the nature of the flesh as evil is as carnal in his love for the soul as he is in his hatred for the flesh, because his thoughts flow from human vanity and not from divine Truth. However, unlike the Manichaeans, Platonists are not so senseless as to despise earthly bodies as though their nature derived from a evil principle. The Platonists attribute to God, the Maker, all the elements together with their qualities that make up this visible and tangible universe. Nevertheless, they think that our souls are so influenced by 'the earthly limbs and mortal members'[1] of our bodies that from these arise the diseases of desires and fears, of joy and sadness—the four perturbations (as Cicero calls

1 Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 6.732. *Terrenique hebetant artus moribundaque membra.*

them[2]) or passions (to use the common expression borrowed from the Greeks) which comprehend the whole defectiveness of human behavior.

Now, if this is true, why should Virgil's Aeneas, learning from his father in the lower world that souls are to return to their bodies, cry out in surprise:

> 'O Father, do you mean, we must believe
> That souls, for upper air, this realm would leave,
> And with slow-moving bodies reunite?
> Whence comes this baleful longing for the light?'[3]

Is it possible that this baleful longing, born of 'earthly limbs and mortal members,' still survives in the much vaunted purity of Platonic souls? Does not Virgil tell us that, when these souls begin to desire a return to their bodies, they have already been purged of every such kind of bodily disease?

From this it is clear that, even if the belief, which is absolutely unfounded, were true, namely, that there exists this unceasing alternation of purification and defilement in the souls which depart from and return to their bodies, no one could rightly say that all culpable and corrupt emotions of our souls have their roots in our earthly bodies. For, here we have the Platonists themselves, through the mouth of their noble spokesman, teaching that this direful desire has so little to do with the body that is compels even the soul already purified of every bodily disease and now subsisting independently of any kind of body to seek an existence in a body.

We conclude, therefore, from their own admission that it is not only because of the flesh that the soul is moved by

2 *Tusc. Disp.* 4.6,11.
3 *Aeneid* 6.719-721.

desires and fears, by joy and sorrow, but that it can also be agitated by these same emotions welling up within the soul itself.

Chapter 6

Man's will, then, is all-important. If it is badly directed, the emotions will be perverse; if it is rightly directed, the emotions will be not merely blameless but even praiseworthy. The will is in all of these affections; indeed, they are nothing else but inclinations of the will. For, what are desire and joy but the will in harmony with things we desire? And what are fear and sadness but the will in disagreement with things we abhor?

The consent of the will in the search for what we want is called desire; joy is the name of the will's consent to the enjoyment of what we desire. So, too, fear is aversion from what we do not wish to happen, as sadness is a disagreement of the will with something that happened against our will. Thus, according as the will of a man is attracted or repelled by the variety of things which he either seeks or shuns, so is it changed or converted into one or other of these different emotions.

It is clear, then, that the man who does not live according to man but according to God must be a lover of the good and, therefore, a hater of evil; since no man is wicked by nature but is wicked only by some defect, a man who lives according to God owes it to wicked men that his hatred be perfect, so that, neither hating the man because of his corruption nor loving the corruption because of the man, he should hate the sin but love the sinner. For, once the corruption has been cured, then all that is left should be loved and nothing remains to be hated.

Chapter 7

Anyone who resolves to love God and to love his neighbor as himself, not in a purely human way but according to the will of God, may certainly, because of this love, be called a man of good will. Holy Scripture usually expresses this attitude by the word *'caritas,'* but it also uses the word *'amor.'* The Apostle says of the man whom he wants to see elected to rule the people that he should be a lover of good [*amatorem boni*].[1] Then, too, when the Lord asked St. Peter: 'Dost thou love [*diligis*] me more than these do?'[2] Peter replied: 'Lord, thou knowest that I love [*amo*] thee.' When the Lord repeated the question, using the verb *diligere* and not *amare,* Peter again answered: 'Lord, thou knowest that I love [*amo*] thee.' Then, asking a third time, Jesus did not use *diligis* but *amas.* The Evangelist goes on to say: 'Peter was grieved because he said to him for the third time 'Dost thou love [*amas*] me?' However, the Lord had not used the verb *amas* three times but only once, for twice He had used *diligis.* From all this we conclude that when our Lord used *diligis* He meant precisely the same as when He used *amas.* Peter, however, did not vary his expression for love, but three times he answered: 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love [*amo*] thee.'

The reason why it seems to me that this point should be mentioned is that there are some who think that *dilectio* or *caritas* is one thing and *amor* another. They maintain that *dilectio* is understood in a good sense and *amor* in a bad sense. Yet it is quite certain that not even the authors of secular literature make this distinction. However, it may be said that it is a matter for philosophers to decide whether or not and

1 Cf. Titus 1.8.
2 John 21.15-17.

in what way these two words are distinguished. What is certain is that their writings make clear that they use the word *amor* to express esteem for the love of good things and even of God Himself. My only point has been to prove that the Scriptures of our religion, whose authority I prefer to all other writings, make no distinction between *amor, dilectio,* and *caritas.* I have already explained that *amor* is used in a good sense. But if anyone imagines that *amor* is used in both a good and a bad sense, while *dilectio* is used only in a good sense, let him take note of what is said in the psalm: 'He that loveth [*diligit*] iniquity hateth his own soul,'[3] and in the text of the Apostle John: 'If anyone loves [*dilexerit*] the world, the love [*dilectio*] of the Father is not in him.'[4] The word *dilectio* is here used twice in the same text, first in a good and then in a bad sense. Since I have already given an example of *amor* used in a good sense, someone may want an example of the same word used in a bad sense. If so, let him read the text: 'Men will be lovers [*amantes*] of self, covetous' [*amatores pecuniae*][5]

The affection of the upright will, then, is good love and that of a perverse will is evil love. Thus, love yearning to possess the object loved is desire and love delighting in the object possessed is joy; its avoidance of what is abhorrent is fear and its sufferance of a present evil is sadness. Further, all such emotions are evil only if man's love is evil; they are good if man's love is good. To prove all this, let us look at a few Scriptural texts. The Apostle 'desires [*concupiscit*] to depart and to be with Christ;'[6] 'My soul hath coveted to long for [*concupivit desiderare*] thy justifications,'[7] or, perhaps,

3 Ps. 10.6.
4 1 John 2.15.
5 2 Tim. 3.2.
6 Phil. 1.23.
7 Ps. 118.20.

better: 'My soul hath longed to covet [*desideravit concupiscere*] thy justifications'; again, 'The desire of [*concupiscentia*] wisdom bringeth to a kingdom.'[8]

Nevertheless, the custom has always prevailed of interpreting *cupiditas* and *concupiscentia* in a bad sense unless a specific object has been indicated. On the other hand, *laetitia* has always been used in a good sense: 'Be glad [*laetamini*] in the Lord, and rejoice, ye just'[9]; 'Thou hast given gladness [*laetitiam*] in my heart';[10] and 'Thou shalt fill me with joy [*laetitia*] with thy countenances.'[11] *Timor* may be used in a good sense, as, for example, when the Apostle says: 'Work out your salvation with fear [*timore*] and trembling,'[12] and: 'Be not highminded but fear' [*time*],[13] and again: 'I fear [*timeo*] lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his guile, so your minds may be corrupted and fall from a single devotion to Christ.'[14]

As for sadness, however, the emotion which Cicero prefers to call sickness (*aegritudo*) and Virgil, pain (*dolor*), as in his words, *dolent gaudentque,*[15] but which I prefer to call sadness [*tristitia*), since sickness and pain are more often used in connection with the body—it is more difficult to decide whether or not this emotion can ever be considered in a good sense.

8 Cf. Wisd. 6.21.
9 Ps. 31.11.
10 Ps. 4.7.
11 Ps. 15.11.
12 Phil. 2.12.
13 Rom. 11.21.
14 2 Cor. 11.3.
15 *Aeneid* 6.733.

Chapter 8

The Stoics held that the soul of the wise man should substitute for the first three 'perturbations,' what the Greeks call *eupátheiai* and Cicero calls *constantiae*: for desire, will; for joy, contentment; and for fear, caution. As for anguish or pain, which for the sake of avoiding ambiguity I prefer to call sadness, they deny that any substitute for it can be found in the soul for a wise man.

Their argument is that will seeks the good, and that this is what a wise man does; that contentment is the possession of the good, which is what the wise man is continually acquiring; that caution avoids evil, which is what the wise man ought to avoid. As to sadness, however, the Stoics claim that it can have no substitute in the soul of the wise man, since it arises from some evil which has already taken place, whereas, as they suppose, no evil whatever can happen to a wise man. To believe them, no one but a philosopher can will, be content, and be cautious; whereas a fool can do nothing but desire and rejoice, fear and be sad. Cicero gives the name *constantiae* to the first three, the attitudes, and the last four, commonly called passions, he calls *perturbationes*. In Greek, as I mentioned, the first three are *eupátheiai* and the last four *páthē*.

I once made as careful a search as I could to determine whether or not the Stoic manner of speaking can be found in Holy Scripture. For example, I came upon this verse of the Prophet: 'There is no contentment to the wicked, saith the Lord God'[1]—which seems to imply that wicked men can 'rejoice' over evil but cannot know 'contentment,' an attitude reserved for the good and the holy. Then, again, I read in the Gospel: 'All things whatever you would [*vultis*] that men

1 Cf. Isa. 57.21.

should do to you, even so do you also to them.'[2] This seems to imply that no man can 'will' anything that is evil or shameful, but can only 'desire' it. Actually, however, in view of our usual way of speaking, some translators have added the word 'good,' so that their translation reads: 'All good things whatever you would that men should do to you.' They thought this precaution necessary lest some one might desire others to do bad things, for example, to offer him luxurious feastings —not to mention anything worse—so that he might believe that by doing the same in return he would be fulfilling this precept. However, in the Greek text, from which the Latin is translated, we do not find the word 'good' inserted; the verse reads: 'All things whatever you would that men should do to you, even so do you also to them.' The reason for this omission, I believe, is that 'good things' are implied by the verb *vultis*. At any rate, the Evangelist does not use the verb *cupitis*.

Nevertheless, it does not follow that normal diction must be at all times bridled by these nice distinctions, even though we sometimes need them. Certainly, when we are reading writers whose authority we may not reject and find that there is no way to save the right interpretation, then we must accept these fine distinctions. This is the case in the examples I cited, one taken from a Prophet and the other from a Gospel. For we all know that the wicked can exult with joy, yet 'there is no contentment to the wicked, saith the Lord.' Now, this can only mean that contentment, *gaudere,* has a different meaning when it is used in its proper and specific sense. In the same way no one would deny that it would be wrong to command men to do to others whatever they desired should be done to themselves, for, in that case, they might mutally share even disgraceful and illicit pleasures. If,

2 Matt. 7.12.

then, the command, 'All things whatever you would that men should do to you, do you the same to them,' is absolutely true and beneficial, it is only because *vultis* is here used in so strict a sense that it excludes anything evil as its object.

Nevertheless, our common way of speaking would not have sanctioned the expression, 'Be not willing to make any manner of lie,'[3] unless there existed an evil will as distinguished from the will which the angels praised: 'Peace on earth among men of good will.'[4] It would be superfluous here to add the word 'good' were there no other will than a good one.

Then, too, why should the Apostle make so much of the fact that charity 'does not rejoice over wickedness,'[5] unless hatred can also rejoice? Moreover, even in secular literature these verbs are used just as indiscriminately. For example, Cicero, who was never at a loss for the right word, says: 'I desire, gentlemen of the Senate, to be merciful.'[6] Now if Cicero can use desire in a good sense, what precisionist has any right to say that Cicero should not have said 'I desire,' but 'I will'? Or take Terence, who makes a dissolute youth, madly in love, cry out: 'I have no other will but for Philumena.'[7] That 'will' meant 'lust' is clear from the reply put in the mouth of his more sensible servant, who says to his master: 'It is better to do something about getting that love out of your heart than to go on talking about it. Words merely inflame your lust to no purpose.'

Then, too, the very Virgilian verse which sums up the four passions so briefly is a proof that *gaudere,* 'to be content,' can be used in the sense of *laetari,* 'to be glad': 'And so men fear and desire, they grieve and are glad,' *dolent gaudentque.*[8]

3 Eccli. 7.14.
4 Luke 2.14.
5 1 Cor. 13.6.
6 *In Catilinam* 1.2,4.
7 *Andria* 2.1,6-8.
8 *Aeneid* 6.733.

He also uses *gaudia* in the expression, *mala mentis gaudia,* meaning 'the evil satisfactions of the soul.'[9]

The conclusion of all this is that both good men and wicked men can will, can be cautious, and can feel content; and we express the same meaning when we say: Both good and wicked men equally desire, and fear, and rejoice. What is true is that the good men do so in a good way, whereas the wicked men do so in a bad way, according as the direction of the will is right or wrong. Moreover, even sorrow, the emotion for which, the Stoics claim, there can be found in the soul of a wise man no corresponding 'attitude,' is a word used in a good sense, especially in Christian writings. The Apostle, for example, praises the Corinthians because they were sorrowful according to God. Of course, someone may object that the Apostle congratulated the Corinthians because their sorrow led them to repentance and that such sorrow can be experienced only by those who have sinned. What he says is this: 'Seeing that the same letter did for a while make you sorry, now I am glad; not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you were made sorry according to God, that you might suffer no loss at our hands. For the sorrow that is according to God produces repentance that surely tends to salvation, whereas the sorrow that is according to the world produces death. For behold this very fact that you were made sorry according to God, what earnestness it has wrought in you.'[10]

On their part, the Stoics may reply that sorrow is useful enough if it makes a man repent of his sin, but that the reason why sorrow cannot exist in the soul of a wise man is that no sin, of which he could repent in sorrow, ever enters his soul; nor, for that matter, could he endure or experience any

9 *Aeneid* 6.278-279.
10 2 Cor. 7.8-11.

other evil which would made him sad. They take the case of Alcibiades (if my memory does not fail me) as a man who merely thought that he was happy but who, in fact, wept whenever Socrates disputed with him and proved that he was really unhappy because he was foolish. In his case, folly was the cause of this useful and desirable sorrow. It was the sorrow of a man grieving for being what he should not be. But, of course, for a fool like that, say the Stoics, they make no claim. It is only a wise man who can never be sorrowful.

Chapter 9

However, in Book IX of this work,[1] I have already replied to the questions raised by the Stoics in connection with the emotions, by showing that this whole dispute is one of words rather than of facts, and that they were more anxious for argument than for truth. So far as Christians are concerned, Holy Scripture and sound doctrine agree that citizens of the holy City of God, who live according to God during this earthly pilgrimage, fear and desire, grieve and rejoice, and, because their love is rightly ordered, they think it right to have such feelings. What they fear is eternal punishment and what they desire is eternal life; they grieve at present because they still groan within themselves while 'waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body';[2] they rejoice in hope because 'then shall come to pass the word that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.'[3] So, too, they fear to sin and desire to persevere; they grieve for sin and rejoice in good works. They fear to sin because they heed the words: 'Be-

1 Cf. above, 9.4,5.
2 Cf. Rom. 8.23.
3 1 Cor. 15.54.

cause iniquity will abound, the charity of the many will grow cold.'[4] And they desire to persevere because it is written: 'He who has persevered to the end will be saved';[5] and they grieve for sin because they know: 'If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;'[6] and they rejoice in good works because 'God loves a cheerful giver.'[7]

In like manner, according as they are weak or strong, they fear or desire temptations and grieve or rejoice when they come. They fear them, because St. Paul says: 'If a person is caught doing something wrong, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'[8] On the other hand, they desire to be tempted, because they hear a strong man of the City of God cry out: 'Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn my reins and my heart.'[9] They sorrow in temptations, because they see Peter weeping,[10] yet they rejoice when they listen to St. James: 'Esteem it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into various trials.'[11]

They are moved with these feelings not only because of themselves but of others whose salvation they desire and whose loss they fear, and they grieve or rejoice when others are lost or saved. Certainly, we who have come from the Gentiles into the Church are particularly pleased to call to mind that noble and heroic man who gloried in his infirmities,[12] that 'teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth'[13] who 'labored more'[14] than any of the other Apostles and who, by

4 Matt. 24.12.
5 Matt. 10.22.
6 1 John 1.8.
7 2 Cor. 9.7.
8 Gal. 6.1.
9 Ps. 25.2.
10 Cf. Matt. 26.75.
11 James 1.2.
12 Cf. 2 Cor. 12.5.
13 1 Tim. 2.7.
14 1 Cor. 15.10.

means of many letters, instructed not only those of God's people who lived in his own time but even those who were to follow. Gladly and with the eyes of faith do all in the City of God look up to this great man, this athlete of Christ who was by Him instructed and anointed, and with Him 'nailed to the cross,'[15] and through Him made glorious, this man, 'made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men,'[16] who lawfully carried on a great conflict[17] in the theater of this world and strained forward to the prize of his heavenly calling.[18] They rejoice to behold him rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep having 'conflicts without and anxieties within,'[19] 'desiring to depart and to be with Christ,'[20] longing to see the Romans that he might produce some results among them, also, as well as among the rest of the Gentiles,[21] jealous concerning the Corinthians and fearing in that jealousy lest their souls be seduced and they forget their chaste betrothal to Christ,[22] a man having 'great sadness and continuous sorrow'[23] in his heart concerning the Israelites, who, 'ignorant of the justice of God and seeking to establish their own, have not submitted to the justice of God,'[24] and denouncing not only with sorrow but with anguish those who have 'sinned before and have not repented of their uncleanness and immorality.'[25]

If these emotions and affections which spring from a love of what is good and from holy charity are to be called vices,

15 Gal. 2.20.
16 1 Cor. 4.9.
17 Cf. 2 Tim. 2.5.
18 Cf. Phil. 3.14.
19 2 Cor. 7.5.
20 Phil. 1.23.
21 Cf. Rom. 1.11,13.
22 Cf. 2 Cor. 11.1-3.
23 Rom. 9.2.
24 Rom. 10.3.
25 Cf. 2 Cor. 12.21.

then all I can say is that real vices should be called virtues. However, the fact is that when such affections as these are directed to their proper objects, they follow right reason, and no one should dare to describe them as diseases or vicious passions. This explains why the Lord Himself, who deigned to lead a human life in the form of a slave[26] but was guilty of no sin whatsoever, displayed these emotions whenever He judged it fitting. And, of course, in One who assumed a true human body and a true human soul, His human affections could not be false. Certainly, the Gospel does not falsely attribute emotions to Christ when it relates that He was saddened and angered by the Jews because of their blindness of heart;[27] that He said: 'I rejoice on your account that you may believe';[28] that when about to raise Lazarus, He even wept;[29] that He greatly desired to eat the passover with His disciples;[30] and that as His passion drew near His soul became sorrowful.[31] On the contrary, in view of some definite purpose, He experienced these emotions in His human soul when He chose to do so, just as, when He chose, He had become man.

Nevertheless, we must admit that, even when men manifest these affections in the right way and according to God, they belong only to this present life and not to that future one to which we are aspiring. Moreover, in our present state we often yield to them unwillingly, so that sometimes, though not by culpable desire but by praiseworthy charity, we are so affected that we weep against our will. What is true, then, of man, namely, that these emotions arise from the infirmity of human nature, is not true of the Lord Jesus, whose weak-

26 Phil. 2.7.
27 Cf. Mark. 3.5.
28 John 11.15.
29 Cf. John 11.35.
30 Luke 22.15.
31 Matt. 26.38; John 12.27.

ness was a result of His power. Yet, so long as we are clothed with the infirmities of this life, we are not living a proper human life if we are entirely devoid of these emotions.

The Apostle has expressed disapproval and detestation of men who are without natural affection,[32] and the holy Psalmist has expressed a reproach in his words: 'I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none.'[33] So long as we are in this place of misery, we certainly cannot attain to immunity from all grief, unless, as one of the world's great writers realized and remarked, it be bought at the high price of insensibility of soul and sluggishness of body.[34]

That state, then, which in Greek is called *apátheia* and in Latin, if the language allowed it, would be *inpassibilitas,* meaning an impassivity of soul (not of course, of the body) or an existence devoid of all emotions disturbing to the spirit and contrary to reason, is manifestly a good devoutly to be longed for, but it is not one that can be attained in this present life. Note that the Apostle is speaking not in behalf of the common run of men but of those who are exceptionally devout, just, and holy when he says: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'[35] That *apátheia*, then, will come about only when there is no longer any sin in man.

In our present life, however, we do sufficiently well if we live without doing wrong. That does not mean that a man considers himself free from all sin. The result of thinking so is that he not only does not live without sin but he receives no pardon for his sin. Now, if that *apátheia* is a state in which no emotion of any kind can affect the mind, surely it

32 Cf. Rom. 1.31.
33 Ps. 68.21.
34 Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 3.6,12.
35 1 John 1.8.

is nothing but a state of stupor, and, as such, is worse than any vice. It is reasonable enough to say that perfect beatitude will be free from every occasion of fear and from every kind of sorrow, but it would be utterly untrue to say that there will be no love and no joy in heaven.

Even if *apátheia* is merely a state in which one neither trembles from fear nor suffers from sorrow, it is still a state to guard against in this life if we want to live as human beings should, in the sense of living according to God's will. However, we can certainly hope for such a condition, but it will come true only in that beatitude of eternal life which we have been promised.

There is one kind of fear which the Apostle John had in mind when he wrote: 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear brings punishment. And he who fears is not perfected in love.'[36] This is not the same kind of fear as that which the Apostle Paul experienced when he was concerned lest the Corinthians be seduced by the wily serpent.[37] Love does not cast out this second kind of fear; in fact, it is a fear peculiar to love. It is to the first kind of fear, the fear that love casts out, that the Apostle Paul refers in his words: 'You have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear.'[38]

As for that fear which is holy, enduring forever,[39] if it can exist in the world to come—and how else can we interpret 'enduring forever'?—it will not be a fear deterring us from an evil which might befall us but a fear preserving us in a good which can never be lost. For, in a state where love of possessed good is utterly unchangeable, there, if I may put it thus, fear of all evil will be perfectly at peace. What 'holy

36 1 John 4.18.
37 Cf. 2 Cor. 11.3.
38 Rom. 8.15.
39 Cf. Ps. 18.10.

fear' really means is a will so fixed that we shall necessarily refuse to sin and guard against it, not out of worry or weakness lest we fall, but because our love is perfectly at peace.

If, on the other hand, no fear of any kind can exist in that utter certainty and security of everlasting joy and gladness, then we must give another meaning to the words: 'The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring for ever and ever.' They must be taken as a parallel to the verse: 'The patience of the poor shall not perish for ever.'[40] Now, obviously, patience cannot be eternal, since it is unnecessary where there are no evils to be borne; all that can be eternal is the state which we shall have attained by means of patience. So, in the same way, perhaps, the words 'holy fear' will 'endure forever' merely mean that heaven, to which this fear leads us, will 'endure forever.'

The conclusion from all this is that, since human life must keep the right road to reach the goal of beatitude, then in the right kind of life all these affections are good, and in the wrongly directed life they are bad. But, of course, when the life of eternal beatitude is reached, love and joy not only will be on the right road but they will have reached a secure home; there will be no place for fear or grief. From this it is clear enough both what citizens of the City of God ought to be during their present pilgrimage, namely, men living according to the spirit and not according to the flesh, according to God and not according to man, and also what they are destined to become once they have reached that immortal home toward which they are now traveling.

It is quite the contrary with the city or society of those wicked men who live according to man rather than according to God and follow the doctrines of men or of devils both in the worship of a false divinity and in contempt of the

40 Ps. 9.19.

true God. The City is harassed by these perverse passions as by plagues and revolutions. It is true that some of the worldlings seem to rule and regulate their passions, but they become swollen with the tumors of godlessness because their medicine of pride is fuller of poison than the malady of passion.[41] And as for those few who, with a vanity which is even more frightful than it is infrequent, pride themselves on being neither raised nor roused nor bent nor bowed by any emotion whatsoever—well, they rather have lost all humanity than won true peace. It is one thing to be unyielding, another to be right; and what is insensible is not necessarily sound.

Chapter 10

It is quite a different question, and one that deserves attention, whether, even before there was any sin, the first man, or rather our first parents—since there was a marriage of two —experienced any of those passions in their animal body from which we shall be free in our spiritual bodies, once all sin has been purged and brought to an end. If they did, how could they have been perfectly happy in that marvelous place called Paradise? How, in fact, can anyone be called absolutely happy if he suffers from fear or sorrow? On the other hand, what could have made our first parents either fearful or sorrowful, surrounded as they were by an abundance of good things, in a place where there was neither death nor ill health to be feared, where nothing was lacking that a well-ordered will could long for, and where nothing was present that could hinder man's material or mental happiness?

41 . . *sic inpietate superbi et elati sunt, ut hoc ipso sint in eis maiores tumores, quo minores dolores.*

The love of our first parents for God was perfectly serene and their mutual affection was that of a true and faithful married couple. And their love brought them immense joy since the object of their love was always theirs to enjoy. There was a calm turning away from sin which, so long as it lasted, kept evil of every other kind from saddening their lives. Or was it, perhaps, possible that they desired to get near enough to eat of the forbidden tree, yet feared they would die, so that both desire and fear already disturbed them even in that blessed place?

The answer is an emphatic 'no,' since no sin whatsoever had yet been committed. For, of course, it is already a sin merely to desire things which the law of God forbids and to abstain from them out of fear of punishment rather than out of love for what is right. It is utterly wrong, then, to think that before the first transgression there had already been committed, in regard to the tree, the kind of sin the Lord warns us against concerning women: 'Anyone who even looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'[1]

Now, this happiness of our first parents, undisturbed by any passion and undiminished by any pain, is the measure of the happiness which the entire human race would have enjoyed if Adam and Eve had not been guilty of the evil which they have transmitted to posterity or if no one of their descendants had committed any wickedness worthy of damnation. And this happiness would have continued until, in virtue of God's blessing, 'Be fruitful and multiply,'[2] the number of the elect had been completed; after which, another even more perfect happiness was to be given, like that which the blessed angels enjoy, a happiness which would have excluded

1 Matt. 5.28.
2 Gen. 1.28.

even the possibility of sin or of death, so that the saints would have lived on earth just as exempt from all labor, pain, and death as will now be their lot to live only after all such things have been suffered and they shall be clothed with incorruptible bodies in the final resurrection.

Chapter 11

Since God foresaw all things and, hence, that man would sin, our conception of the supernatural City of God must be based on what God foreknew and forewilled, and not on human fancies that could never come true, because it was not in God's plan that they should. Not even by his sin could man change the counsels of God, in the sense of compelling Him to alter what He had once decided. The truth is that, by His omniscience, God could foresee two future realities: how bad man whom God had created good was to become, and how much good God was to make out of this very evil.

Though we sometimes hear the expression, 'God changed His mind,' or even read in the figurative language of Scripture that 'God repented,'[1] we interpret these sayings not in reference to the decisions determined on by Almighty God but in reference to the expectations of man or to the order of natural causes. So, we believe, as Scripture tells us,[2] that God created man right and, therefore, endowed with a good will, for without a good will he would not have been 'right.'

The good will, then, is a work of God, since man was created by God with a good will. On the contrary, the first bad will, which was present in man before any of his bad deeds, was rather a falling away from the work of God into

1 Gen. 6.6; Exod. 32.14; 1 Sam. 15.11.
2 Eccle. 7.30.

man's own works than a positive work itself; in fact, a fall into bad works, since they were 'according to man' and not 'according to God.' Thus, this bad will or, what is the same, man in so far as his will is bad is like a bad tree which brings forth these bad works like bad fruit.

A bad will, however, contrary as it is to nature and not according to nature, since it is a defect in nature, still belongs to the nature of which it is a defect, since it has no existence apart from this nature. This nature, of course, is one that God has created out of nothing, and not out of Himself, as was the case when He begot the Word through whom all things have been made.[3] Though God has fashioned man from the dust of the earth, that same dust, like all earthly matter, has been made out of nothing. And it was a soul made out of nothing which God united to the body when man was created.

In the long run, however, the good triumphs over the evil. It is true, of course, that the Creator permits evil, to prove to what good purpose His providence and justice can use even evil. Nevertheless, while good can exist without any defect, as in the true and supreme God Himself, and even in the whole of that visible and invisible creation, high in the heavens above this gloomy atmosphere, evil cannot exist without good, since the natures to which the defects belong, in as much as they are natures, are good. Moreover, we cannot remove evil by the destruction of the nature or any part of it, to which the damage has been done. We can only cure a disease or repair the damage by restoring the nature to health or wholeness.

Take the case of the will. Its choice is truly free only when it is not a slave to sin and vice. God created man with such a free will, but, once that kind of freedom was lost by man's

3 John 1.3.

fall from freedom, it could be given back only by Him who had the power to give it. Thus, Truth tells us: 'If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.'[4] He might equally have said: 'If, therefore, the Son saves you, you will be saved indeed.' For the same reason that God's Son is our Saviour He is also our Liberator.

Thus, man once lived according to God in a Paradise that was both material and spiritual. Eden was not merely a place for the physical needs of the body, but had a spiritual significance as food for the soul. On the other hand, it was not so purely spiritual as to delight only the soul, and not also a place where man could get enjoyment for his bodily senses. It was both, and for both purposes.

However, the joy of Eden was short-lived because of the proud and, therefore, envious spirit who fell from the heavenly Paradise when his pride caused him to turn away from God to his own self and the pleasures and pomp of tyranny, preferring to rule over subjects than be subject himself. (His downfall and that of his companions, the former angels of God who became his angels, I have discussed, to the best of my ability, in Books XI and XII of this present work.[5])

This Lucifer, striving to insinuate his sly seductions into the minds of man whose fidelity he envied, since he himself had fallen, chose for his spokesman a serpent in the terrestrial Paradise, where all the animals of earth were living in harmless subjection to Adam and Eve. It was suited for the task because it was a slimy and slippery beast that could slither and twist on its tortuous way. So, subjecting it to his diabolical design by the powerful presence of his angelic nature and misusing it as his instrument, he, at first, parleyed cunningly with the woman as with the weaker part of that

4 John 8.36.
5 Cf. above, 11.13. and 12.1.

human society, hoping gradually to gain the whole. He assumed that a man is less gullible and can be more easily tricked into following a bad example than into making a mistake himself. This was the case with Aaron. He did not consent to the making of idols for his erring people, but he gave an unwilling assent when he was asked by the people to do so;[6] and it is not to be thought that Solomon was deceived into believing in the worship of idols, but was merely won over to this sacrilege by feminine flattery.[7] So, too, we must believe that Adam transgressed the law of God, not because he was deceived into believing that the lie was true, but because in obedience to a social compulsion he yielded to Eve, as husband to wife, as the only man in the world to the only woman. It was not without reason that the Apostle wrote: 'Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived.'[8] He means, no doubt, that Eve accepted the serpent's word as true, whereas Adam refused to be separated from his partner even in a union of sin—not, of course, that he was, on that account, any less guilty, since he sinned knowingly and deliberately. That is why the Apostle does not say: 'He did not sin,' but 'he was not deceived.' Elsewhere, he implies that Adam did sin: 'Through one man sin entered into the world.' And a little further on, even more plainly, he adds: 'After the likeness of the transgression of Adam.'[9] The distinction is here made between those who, like Adam, sin with full knowledge and those who are deceived because they do not know that what they are doing is a sin. It is this distinction which gives meaning to the statement: 'Adam was not deceived.'

Nevertheless, in so far as he had had no experience of the

6 Exod. 32.2,21-24.
7 3 Kings 11.4.
8 I Tim. 2.14.
9 Rom. 5.12,14.

divine severity, Adam could be deceived in believing that his transgression was merely venial. And, therefore, he was at least not deceived in the same way that Eve was; he was merely mistaken concerning the judgment that would follow his attempt to excuse himself: 'The woman you placed at my side gave me fruit from the tree and I ate.'[10]

To summarize briefly: though not equally deceived by believing the serpent, they equally sinned and were caught and ensnared by the Devil.

Chapter 12

Some one may be puzzled by the fact that other sins do not change human nature in the way that the transgression of our first parents not merely damaged theirs but had the consequence that human nature, ever since, has been subject to death, to the great corruption which we can see and experience, and to so many and such opposing passions which disturb and disorder it, which was not the case in Eden before there was sin, even though the human body was animal then as now. However, no one has a right to be puzzled, on the assumption that our first parents' sin must have been a small, venial sin, since it involved merely a matter of food —a thing good and harmless in itself apart from being forbidden, as everything else was good which God had created and planted in that place of perfect happiness.

However, what is really involved in God's prohibition is obedience, the virtue which is, so to speak, the mother and guardian of all the virtues of a rational creature. The fact is that a rational creature is so constituted that submission is good for it while yielding to its own rather than its Creator's

10 Gen. 3.12.

will is, on the contrary, disastrous. Now, this command to refrain from a single kind of food when they were surrounded by an abundance of every other kind of food was so easy to obey and so simple to remember for anyone still free from passion resisting the will (as would be the case later on, in punishment for sin) that the sinfulness involved in breaking this precept was so very great precisely because the difficulty of submission was so very slight.

Chapter 13

Moreover, our first parents only fell openly into the sin of disobedience because, secretly, they had begun to be guilty. Actually, their bad deed could not have been done had not bad will preceded it; what is more, the root of their bad will was nothing else than pride. For, 'pride is the beginning of all sin.'[1] And what is pride but an appetite for inordinate exaltation? Now, exaltation is inordinate when the soul cuts itself off from the very Source to which it should keep close and somehow makes itself and becomes an end to itself. This takes place when the soul becomes inordinately pleased with itself, and such self-pleasing occurs when the soul falls away from the unchangeable Good which ought to please the soul far more than the soul can please itself. Now, this falling away is the soul's own doing, for, if the will had merely remained firm in the love of that higher immutable Good which lighted its mind into knowledge and warmed its will into love, it would not have turned away in search of satisfaction in itself and, by so doing, have lost that light and warmth. And thus Eve would not have believed that the serpent's lie was true, nor would Adam have preferred the

1 Eccli. 10.15.

will of his wife to the will of God nor have supposed that his transgression of God's command was venial when he refused to abandon the partner of his life even in a partnership of sin.

Our first parents, then, must already have fallen before they could do the evil deed, before they could commit the sin of eating the forbidden fruit. For such 'bad fruit' could come only from a 'bad tree.'[2] That the tree became bad was contrary to its nature, because such a condition could come about only by a defection of the will, which is contrary to nature. Notice, however, that such worsening by reason of a defect is possible only in a nature that has been created out of nothing. In a word, a nature is a nature because it is something made by God, but a nature falls away from That which Is because the nature was made out of nothing.

Yet, man did not so fall away from Being as to be absolutely nothing, but, in so far as he turned himself toward himself, he became less than he was when he was adhering to Him who is supreme Being. Thus, no longer to be in God but to be in oneself in the sense of to please oneself is not to be wholly nothing but to be approaching nothingness. For this reason, Holy Scripture gives another name to the proud. They are called 'rash' and 'self willed.'[3] Certainly, it is good for the heart to be lifted up, not to oneself, for this is the mark of pride, but to God, for this is a sign of obedience which is precisely the virtue of the humble.

There is, then, a kind of lowliness which in some wonderful way causes the heart to be lifted up, and there is a kind of loftiness which makes the heart sink lower. This seems to be a sort of paradox, that loftiness should make something lower and lowliness lift something up. The reason for this is that holy lowliness makes us bow to what is above us and, since

2 Cf. Matt. 7.18.
3 Cf. 2 Pet. 2.10.

there is nothing above God, the kind of lowliness that makes us close to God exalts us. On the other hand, the kind of loftiness which is a defection by this very defection refuses this subjection to God and so falls down from Him who is supreme, and by falling comes to be lower. Thus it comes to pass, as Scripture says, that 'when they were lifting themselves up thou hast cast them down.'[4] Here, the Psalmist does not say: 'When they had been lifted up,' as though they first lifted themselves up and afterwards were cast down, but 'when they are lifting themselves up, at that moment they were cast down,' which means that their very lifting themselves up was itself a fall.

Hence it is that just because humility is the virtue especially esteemed in the City of God and so recommended to its citizens in their present pilgrimage on earth and because it is one that was particularly outstanding in Christ, its King, so it is that pride, the vice contrary to this virtue, is, as Holy Scripture tells us, especially dominant in Christ's adversary, the Devil. In fact, this is the main difference which distinguishes the two cities of which we are speaking. The humble City is the society of holy men and good angels; the proud city is the society of wicked men and evil angels. The one City began with the love of God; the other had its beginnings in the love of self.

The conclusion, then, is that the Devil would not have begun by an open and obvious sin to tempt man into doing something which God had forbidden, had not man already begun to seek satisfaction in himself and, consequently, to take pleasure in the words: 'You shall be as Gods.'[5] The promise of these words, however, would much more truly have come to pass if, by obedience, Adam and Eve had kept

4 Cf. Ps. 72.18.
5 Gen. 3.5.

close to the ultimate and true Source of their being and had not, by pride, imagined that they were themselves the source of their being. For, created gods are gods not in virtue of their own being but by a participation in the being of the true God.[6] For, whoever seeks to be more than he is becomes less, and while he aspires to be self-sufficing he retires from Him who is truly sufficient for him.[7]

Thus, there is a wickedness by which a man who is self-satisfied as if he were the light turns himself away from that true Light which, had man loved it, would have made him a sharer in the light; it was this wickedness which secretly preceded and was the cause of the bad act which was committed openly. It has been truly written that 'before destruction, the heart of a man is exalted: and before he be glorified, it is humbled.'[8] The 'destruction' which is not seen precedes the 'destruction' which is seen, though the former is not looked upon as such. For, who would think of exaltation as a ruin; yet there is a fall the moment that the will turns away from the Highest. On the other hand, everyone can recognize the ruin when a command has been openly and unmistakably violated.

Therefore, God forbade that which, when committed, could be defended by no pretense of sanctity. And I am willing to say that it is advantageous for the proud to fall into some open and manifest sin, and so become displeasing to themselves, after they had already fallen by pleasing themselves. For, when Peter wept and reproached himself, he was in a far healthier condition than when he boasted and was satisfied with himself. A verse of the psalm expresses this truth: 'Fill their faces with shame; and they shall seek thy name,

6 Cf. above, 9.23.
7 . . .*dum sibi sufficere deligit, ab illo, qui ei vere sufficit, deficit.*
8 Cf. Prov. 18.12. Augustine's text reads: *Ante ruinam exaltatur. . .*

O Lord,'[9] meaning, 'May those who pleased themselves in seeking their own glory find pleasure in Thee by seeking Thy name.'

Chapter 14

There is a worse and more execrable kind of pride whereby one seeks the subterfuge of an excuse even when one's sin is manifest. There was an example of this in the case of our first parents when the woman said: 'The serpent deceived me and I did eat,' and when Adam said: 'The woman, whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree and I did eat.'[1] There is not a hint here of any prayer for pardon, not a word of entreaty for any medicine to heal their wound. They do not, it is true, deny like Cain that they had sinned. Still, their pride seeks to put the blame for the sin on someone else. The pride of the woman blames the serpent; the man's pride blames the woman. But where there is a case, as here, of an open transgression of a divine command, they did more to increase their guilt than to lessen it. For, where there is a question of believing or obeying, no one can be preferred to God, and, therefore the blame was in no way lessened merely because the woman believed the suggestion of the serpent and the man obeyed the woman who gave him the fruit.

Chapter 15

For many reasons, then, the punishment meted out for disobeying God's order was just. It was God who had created

9 Ps. 82.17.

1 Gen. 3.12,13.

man. He had made man to His own image, set man above all other animals, placed him in Paradise, and given him an abundance of goods and of well-being. God had not burdened man with many precepts that were heavy and hard, but had propped him up with a single precept that was momentary and utterly easy and that was meant merely as a medicine to make man's obedience strong, and as a reminder that it was good for man who is a creature to give his service freely to God who is his Master.

This just punishment involves many consequences. Man who was destined to become spiritual even in his flesh, if only he had kept the commandment, became, instead, fleshly even in his soul.

Man who, by human pride, had had his own way was abandoned, by divine justice, to his own resources—not, that is, to his power but to his weakness. The very self that had been obeyed when he sinned now became a tyrant to torment and, in place of the liberty he longed for, he had to live in the misery of servitude. He had chosen freely the death of his soul; he was now condemned, unwillingly, to the death of his body. He had been a deserter from eternal life; he was now doomed to eternal death—from which nothing could save him but grace.

This punishment was neither excessive nor unjust. Anyone who thinks otherwise merely proves his inability to measure the magnitude of this sinfulness in a case where sin was so easy to avoid. For, just as the obedience of Abraham is rightly regarded as magnificent precisely because the killing of his son was a command so difficult to obey, so in Paradise the lack of obedience was so lamentable because the prohibition imposed was so easy to respect. And just as the obedience of the Second Man is so marvelous because He made Himself obedient unto death, so is the disobedience of the first man so

malignant because he made himself disobedient unto death. It was the Creator Himself who commanded; the thing commanded was perfectly easy; the penalty attached was known to be great. Surely, then, the malice is incalculable when the creature defies, in a matter so simple and in the face of so fearful a penalty, the supreme authority of Omnipotence.

Actually, in the punishment for that sin the only penalty for disobedience was, to put it in a single word, more disobedience. There is nothing else that now makes a man more miserable than his own disobedience to himself. Because he would not do what he could, he can no longer do what he would.[1] It is true that even in the Garden, before man sinned, he could not do everything; but he could still do all he desired to do, since he had no desire to do what he could not do. It is different now. As Scripture says: 'Man is like to a breath of air.'[2] That is what we see in Adam's progeny. In too many ways to mention, man cannot do what he desires to do, for the simple reason that he refuses to obey himself; that is to say, neither his spirit nor even his body obeys his will. For, in spite of his will, his spirit is frequently troubled and his body feels pain, grows old, and dies. Now, if only our nature, wholly and in all its parts, would obey our will, we would not have to suffer these and all our other ills so unwillingly.

As for the objection that the only source of suffering that makes service impossible is the body, the first answer is that the source is of no consequence. The main fact is that we are suffering the just retribution of the omnipotent God. It is because it was to Him that we refused our obedience and our service that our body, which used to be obedient, now troubles us by its insubordination. And notice that, though our refusal of obedience to God could bring trouble on ourselves, it could

1 . . . *ut, quoniam noluit quod potuit, quod non potest velit.*
2 Ps. 143.4.

do no harm to God. For He has no such need of our service as we have need of the service of our body. Thus, although His punishment can bring pain to us, our sin could inflict no suffering on Him.

A second answer is that when people talk of the sufferings of the body, what they really mean are the sufferings of the soul which are felt in, and because of, the body. For, of course, the flesh of itself, apart from the soul, can feel neither pain nor desire. When we say that 'the flesh lusts' after anything or that the body suffers pain, what is meant, as I have already explained, is that it is the man himself who lusts or suffers, or, at least, that some part of his soul is affected by what happens to his flesh, whether it is hard pressure causing pain or a soft impression producing pleasure. Pain of body is simply suffering of soul arising from the body; it is, as it were, the soul's disapproval of what is happening to the body, much as that anguish of spirit which is called sorrow is a disapproval of what is happening in opposition to our wills.

There is an important difference, however. Whereas sorrow is usually preceded by fear, an emotion which is itself in the soul and not in the body, bodily pain is never preceded by anything that could be called a fear in the flesh and that could be felt before the pain is felt. Bodily pleasure, however, is preceded by a kind of appetite, a sensation in the flesh corresponding to desire in the soul, familiar in the form of hunger and thirst, and commonly called *libido* when connected with sex—although, strictly speaking, lust is a word applicable to any kind of appetite, as in the classical definition of anger as a lust for revenge. In connection with this definition, it might be objected that there are times when a man gets angry with inanimate things that cannot feel his revenge, as when a man smashes a pen or crushes a quill that

is writing badly. However, even here there is a kind of lust for revenge, a subconscious projection, if I may use the expression, of that law of retribution which runs: Ill betide him who evil does.[3] But, to return to the word 'lust.' As lust for revenge is called anger, so lust for money is avarice, lust to win at any price is obstinacy, lust for bragging is vanity. And there are still many other kinds of lust, some with names and some without. For example, it would be difficult to find a specific name for that lust for domination which plays such havoc with the souls of ambitious soldiers and comes to light in every civil war.

Chapter 16

There are, then, many kinds of lusts for this or that, but when the word is used by itself without specification it suggests to most people the lust for sexual excitement. Such lust does not merely invade the whole body and outward members; it takes such complete and passionate possession of the whole man, both physically and emotionally, that what results is the keenest of all pleasures on the level of sensation; and, at the crisis of excitement, it practically paralyzes all power of deliberate thought.

This is so true that it creates a problem for every lover of wisdom and holy joys who is both committed to a married life and also conscious of the apostolic ideal, that every one should 'learn how to possess his vessel in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.'[1] Any such person would prefer, if this were possible, to

3 *Verum et ista licet inrationabilior, tamen quaedam ulciscendi libido est, ut nescio qua, ut ita dixerim quasi umbra retributionis, ut qui male faciunt mala patiantur.*

1 Thess. 4.4.

beget his children without suffering this passion. He could wish that, just as all his other members obey his reason in the performance of their appointed tasks, so the organs of parenthood, too, might function in obedience to the orders of will and not be excited by the ardors of lust.

Curiously enough, not even those who love this pleasure most—whether legitimately or illegitimately indulged—can control their own indulgences. Sometimes, their lust is most importunate when they least desire it; at other times, the feelings fail them when they crave them most, their bodies remaining frigid when lust is blazing in their souls. Thus, lust itself, lascivious and legitimate, refuses to obey, and the very passion that so often joins forces to resist the soul is sometimes so divided against itself that, after it has roused the soul to passion, it refuses to awaken the feelings of the flesh

Chapter 17

It is no wonder that everyone feels very much ashamed of this kind of lust; hence, those organs, which lust in its own right, if I may so speak, sways or allays in defiance of the will's decision, are properly called *pudenda*. Things were different before man sinned as we can see from the text: They 'were naked, but they felt no shame.'[1] They were aware, of course, of their nakedness, but they felt no shame, because no desire stirred their organs in defiance of their deliberate decision, for the time had not yet come when the rebellion of the flesh was a witness and reproach to the rebellion of man against his Maker.

Of course, it is merely a popular misunderstanding to imagine that, 'because their eyes were opened,' they had been

1 Gen. 2.25.

created blind. Actually, Adam saw the animals he named and Eve 'saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold.'[2] Their eyes, then, could see, but they were not open enough in the sense that they themselves had not been observant enough to realize in what a raiment of grace they must have been robed to have been unaware so long of any war between their members and their will. But, once the raiment of grace was removed, they were taught the lesson that disobedience to God is punishable by disobedience to oneself. A strange and irrepressible commotion sprang up in their bodies that made nakedness indecent. They realized the rebellion and it made them ashamed.

That explains what is said after they violated the commandment of God by their open transgression: 'And the eyes of both of them were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves aprons.'[3] It was not, then, in order to see outward things that their 'eyes were opened,' because they could see such things already; it was in order that they might see the difference between the good they had lost and the evil into which they had fallen. That is why the tree is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They had been forbidden to touch it because, if they did, it would bring on the experience of this distinction. It takes the experience of the pains of sickness to open our eyes to the pleasantness of health.

'They perceived themselves to be naked' because they had been stripped of that grace which—so long as there had been no law in their members, warring, because of sin, against the law of their minds[4]—had taken away all shame from nakedness. All that they had really learned was what sinful experi-

2 Gen. 3.6.
3 Gen. 3.7.
4 Cf. Rom. 7.23.

ence was bound to teach them, namely, how harmful it is not to believe and not to obey. Had they not sinned, had they believed and obeyed God, they would have been happier in their ignorance. And, so, it was because they were ashamed of the rebellion in their flesh, which was at once a proof and a penalty of their rebellion against God, that they 'sewed together fig leaves and made themselves aprons,' to cover their loins as athletes do. (Two Latin words have here been used by the translators, *succintoria* [aprons], and *campestria. Campestria* are the loin coverings used by athletes when they strip for sports in the Campus Martius, which is why athletes wearing shorts are nicknamed *campestrati.*) What happened to our first parents was that a sense of shame forced them to cover those parts of the body where passion was in rebellion against wills penalized for their rebellion against God. Since then, peoples of every race—because, of course, every race springs from them—have felt the force of this compulsive instinct. In fact, in places where people are less sophisticated, they still wear drawers even when they take a bath. And even in the inaccessible solitudes of India where the so-called 'gymnosophists' dwell, these philosophizers never go so naked but that they wear their loin cloths.

Chapter 18

Wherever sexual passion is at work, it feels ashamed of itself. This is so not only in the case of rape, which seeks dark corners to escape the law, but even where worldly society has legalized prostitution. Even when there is no fear of the law and passion is indulged with impunity, it shrinks from the public gaze. There is a natural shame which forces even houses of ill fame to make provision for secrecy, because,

easy as it was for lust to get rid of legal restrictions, it was far too difficult ever to remove the darkness from the dens of indecency. The most shameless of men know that what they are doing is shameful; much as they love this pleasure, they hate publicity.

Even the parental duty, done as it is in accordance with Roman law for the procreation of children,[1] and, therefore, both legally right and morally good, looks for a room from which all witnesses have been carefully removed. It is only after the best-man and bridesmaids, the friends and the servants, have gone from the room that the bridegroom even begins to show any signs of intimate affection. It may be true in general, as the 'greatest master of the Roman language'[2] once put it, that deeds well done like to come into the light,[3] in the sense that they want to become known; but this deed, well done as it is, may seek to be known when done but it is certainly ashamed to be seen in the doing. What is done by parents so that children may be born comes to be known to all the world; in fact, it is to get this action done that marriages are made with such pomp. But when it is being done, it is different. Not even the children who have been born because it was done are allowed to be witnesses while it is being done. Yes, it is a good deed; but it is one that seeks to be known only after it is done, and is ashamed to be seen while it is being done. The reason can only be that what, by nature, has a purpose that everyone praises involves, by penalty, a passion that makes everyone ashamed.

1 *Concubitus coniugalis, qui secundum matrimonialium praescripta tabularum procreandorum fit causa liberorum* . . . Both Roman and early ecclesiastical law required a written marriage contract (*tabulae nuptiales*), indicating procreation of children as the purpose of marriage, and signed by ten witnesses.

2 Lucan, *Pharsalia* 7.62.

3 Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 2.26,64.

Chapter 19

What I have just said explains why, at least, the best of the philosophers have admitted that anger and lust reveal the defective parts of the soul because, even in the pursuit of purposes which wisdom condones, these passions become so roused and unrestrained as to call for the necessary moderation of mental and rational control. Thus, as the philosophers put it, a third part of the soul, stationed in a kind of watch tower, is needed to direct operations of the other two. It is only when this part rules and the others obey that a man can be wholly upright. According to the philosophers, then, two parts of the soul, even in a wise and upright man, are defective. They must be bridled and checked by the restraining force of wisdom when the objects pursued are unjust and they must be redirected to purposes which the rule of reason approves. Thus, anger can be justly used in the prevention of public disorder and lust can be used in connection with parental duty.

Now, in the Garden, before the fall, these two 'parts of the soul' were not 'defective.' This means that these passions were never so roused counter to the commands of the rational will that reason was forced, so to speak, to put them in harness. It is different now, when even people who live a life of moral and religious self-control have to bridle these passions. This may be easy or difficult, but the bit and bridle are always needed. Now, the present condition is not that of healthy human nature; it is a sickness induced by sin.

But how is it, then, that shame does not seek to conceal what is said and done out of anger or other passions in the way it seeks to hide the lustful excitement of the sexual organs. The answer must be that, in the case of anger and other passions, it is not the passions themselves that move any

parts of the body, but the will which remains in control and consents to the movement. Even when a man is angry, he could neither utter a word nor hit a foe, unless the will, in some way, gave an order to the tongue or the fist to move. It is the same will that moves these same members as when the man feels no anger at all. With the genital organs it is different. There, lust so claims the right to rule that, apart from passion, there can be no excitement except what is spontaneous or artificially induced. It is this tyranny of lust that makes men ashamed. They hate to have such uncontrollable movements seen. No man much minds even a crowd watching when he is wrongfully taking revenge, but no husband wants a single witness when he is rightfully doing his marital duty.

Chapter 20

Those snarling philosophers called Cynics could see no meaning in modesty and proposed to replace human bashfulness by the brazen indecency of dogs. They argued that, since the marital act is ethically good, there can be nothing shameless in doing it in public and, therefore, that a street or square is as good a place for that purpose as anywhere else. Happily, this sexual sophistication has been defeated in the battle with natural shame. It is true that Diogenes is supposed to have been blatant enough to do such a deed and then to believe that Cynicism, as a philosophical school, would continue to be better respected the deeper the indecency was graven in the memory of men. He was mistaken. His own followers repudiated the practice. Decency defeated the doctrine; as men among men, the Cynics were too ashamed to pretend that men should imitate dogs. I doubt, in fact, whether Diogenes himself or any of the others of whom the

story is told did more than put on a show of going through the motions under their philosophers' cloak, so that no one could see what was happening. I do not believe that, with a crowd all around them, they could have actually stimulated their passions. Lust itself, I imagine, would have been ashamed to respond even though sophisticates were cynical enough to put on such a show.

At any rate, we have Cynics in our midst today. They still wear Diogenes' cloak and even carry his stick. But not one of them dares to do what Diogenes is said to have done; if they did, not only would stones be flung at the dogs but the mob would stop them by spitting in their faces. The undeniable truth is that a man by his very nature is ashamed of sexual lust. And he is rightly ashamed because there is here involved an inward rebellion which is a standing proof of the penalty which man is paying for his original rebellion against God. For, lust is a usurper, defying the power of the will and playing the tyrant with man's sexual organs. It is here that man's punishment particularly and most properly appears, because these are the organs by which that nature is reproduced which was so changed for the worse by its first great sin. From responsibility in that sin no individual is exempt, since it was committed when all mankind was a single man and therefore it involved us all in a common penalty. This penalty was imposed by God's justice on each of us and nothing but God's grace in each of us can expiate our individual guilt.

Chapter 21

No one, then, should dream of believing that the kind of lust which made the married couple in the Garden ashamed of their nakedness was meant to be the only means of fulfill-

ing the command which God gave when He 'blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth.'[1] The fact is that this passion had no place before they sinned; it was only after the fall, when their nature had lost its power to exact obedience from the sexual organs, that they fell and noticed the loss and, being ashamed of their lust, covered these unruly members. But God's blessings on their marriage, with the command to increase and multiply and fill the earth, was given before the fall. The blessing remained even when they had sinned, because it was a token that the begetting of children is a part of the glory of marriage and has nothing to do with the penalty for sin.

Unfortunately, there are some people today who know so little of the graces that were given in the Garden that they can imagine no other way of begetting children except by arousing that lust which they themselves have experienced, but which involves, as every one knows, an element of shame even in the most high-minded marriages. There are other people who have no faith in the Scriptures and who simply laugh at the story that is was only after the fall into sin that Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness and covered their pudenda. A third class accepts and reveres the Scriptures, but insists on giving an allegorical interpretation to the text: 'Increase and multiply.' They say there is no more reference here to increase in population than there is in the words: 'Thou didst increase strength in my soul.'[2] So, too, with the rest of the text in Genesis: 'and fill the earth and subdue it.' On the theory of spiritual interpretation, they take the 'earth' to mean the body which is 'filled' by the presence of the soul and which is most perfectly 'subdued' when the soul is increased in virtue. They, too, hold that birth could

1 Gen. 1.28.
2 Ps. 137.3.

no more take place then than now without that passion which, as soon as it began with the fall, made Adam and Eve so self-conscious, so confused and so eager for concealment; and, in any case, they say, there would never have been any intercourse in the Garden but only outside, as, in fact, turned out to be the case, since it was only after the expulsion that their children were conceived and born.

Chapter 22

For ourselves, we have no manner of doubt that to 'increase and multiply and fill the earth' in obedience to the blessing and command of God is the very mission which God gave to marriage as He instituted it from the beginning and, so, before the fall. That is why He made the bodies of the two sexes, male and female, so manifestly different. And it was precisely on the conjugal duty itself that God's blessing fell; for, as soon as Scripture notes: 'Male and female He created them,' the text continues: 'And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it' and the rest.

Now it is true that much of what is here said is susceptible of a spiritual interpretation, but it makes no sense to say that 'male' and 'female' are allegories of two qualities in a single person, for example that 'male' stands for the part that rules and 'female' for the part that is ruled. The simple truth is, as is luminously clear from the bodies of the different sexes, that males and females were made as they were for the purpose of increasing and multiplying, and filling the earth by becoming fathers and mothers. To deny this would be utterly absurd. Our Lord was once asked the question: 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?' The question

was possible because, by reason of the hardness of their hearts, Moses permitted the Israelites to give their wives a written notice of dismissal and then put them away. To the direct question, our Lord answered: 'Have you not read that the Creator, from the beginning, made them male and female and said: For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. Therefore now they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God joined together, let no man put asunder.'[1] Now, the words here obviously refer to the bond of marriage in which a man and woman are bound to each other. In the light of our Lord's language it is absurd to interpret 'male' and 'female' as symbols, either of the spirit that rules and the flesh that obeys, or of the rational soul that controls and the irrational appetite that is restrained, or of the contemplative faculty that is higher and the active power which is lower, or of understanding in the mind and sensation in the body.

It is, therefore, certain that male and female were created in the beginning exactly as we see and know them now, as human beings of different sex. If the two were called one, that is explained either by their unity in marriage or by the fact that the first woman was made from the side of the man. To confirm this we have the Apostle appealing to this first marriage as a model, as the marriage instituted by God from the beginning, when he calls upon the husbands in every family to love their wives.[2]

1 Matt. 19.3-6.
2 Eph. 5.25; Col. 3.19.

Chapter 23

The view that there would have been no procreation in Paradise if there had been no sin amounts to this, that man had to sin to fill up the number of the saints. The argument runs: If no sin, then no procreation; but, if no procreation, only two saints; but, more than two saints were necessary; therefore, sin was necessary. Now, this conclusion is an absurdity. Hence, we must believe that the number of saints required to populate the city of the blessed would have been brought into existence even if no one had sinned, and this number equals the number of those who, as things now are, continue to be gathered by God's grace from the multitude of sinners and will continue to be gathered so long as there are parents and babies among the children of this world.

We conclude, therefore, that, even if there had been no sin in the Garden, there would still have been marriages worthy of that blessed place and that lovely babies would have flowered from a love uncankered by lust. Unfortunately, to show just how that could be we have no present experience to help us. Nevertheless, when we consider how many other human organs still obey the will even after the fall, we have no reason for doubting that the one unruly member could have done the same, so long as there was no defiance from lust. After all, we move our hands and feet to their appropriate functions whenever we choose and with no rebellion on their part. And both personal experience and observation prove that great facility of movement can be obtained, particularly by trained craftsman who have perfected native skill by long practice. Why, then, should we refuse to believe that the organs of generation, in the absence of that lust which is a just penalty imposed because of the sin of rebellion, could have obeyed men's wills as obediently as other organs do?

In this connection, there is an analogy in Cicero's *De republica* which may help us. In discussing different ways of ruling, he uses a simile taken from human nature. The organs of our body, he notes, obey us like children, so easy is it to control them, but the passions of the soul have to be treated like slaves and ruled in a harsher way. And in general, this is the natural order of things, with the soul as the ruler of the body, even though the soul rules the body more easily than it rules itself.

But the peculiarity of that passion of lust which we are here discussing is that the soul can neither sufficiently control itself so as to be free from lust, nor in any way control the body when lust takes over the control of sexual excitement in defiance of the will. This defiance is precisely what makes both lust itself and the organs it controls such sources of shame. Our soul is ashamed because our body, which by its lower nature is subject to the soul, defies the higher nature; whereas, in the other passions which resist the soul, there is less shame because, being conquered by a part of itself, the soul can still claim victory for itself. It is a victory which is out of order and imperfect, because it is a victory won by parts of the soul that ought to be subordinate to the soul; but, these parts are the soul's parts, and, therefore, the victory, as I said, is the soul's victory. Of course, for the soul's self-conquest to be integrally perfect, praiseworthy and virtuous, the irrational passions must be subdued by the mind and the reason, while the reason itself is obedient to God. However, even that imperfect victory, which the soul can claim when its own defective passions are in revolt, is less shameful than the defeat which is suffered when the body, which is not a part of the soul, and is inferior to the soul, and whose very life depends, by its very nature, on the soul, defies the soul, when the soul desires and demands that the body should obey.

As for the second question on the safeguarding of chastity, it is sufficient for the will to retain its control over all those other bodily members without whose co-operation the organs which lust excites in defiance of the will are unable to secure what they seek. Thus, passion remains but its power is restrained. Had there been no guilt of disobedience to God, there would have been no penalty of disobedient organs and marriage in Paradise would have been free from those moral stresses and strains caused by the tensions between reason and passion. There is no doubt that the will would have been able to keep passion in place, so that every organ of the body would be equally obedient to reason, whether it was the hand sowing seed in the field of earth or the generative organ in the field of birth.[1]

Finally, had there been no fall, there would have been none of the embarrassment I now feel in pursuing this matter further, and no need to apologize for possible offense to chaste ears. On the contrary, one could feel free to discuss every detail connected with sex without the least fear of indelicacy. There would, in fact, be no such thing as an unbecoming word and no reference to one part of the body could be any more improper than reference to the other parts. Therefore, if some of my readers have been shocked, let them put this down to their fallen nature, not to their nature as such; let them blame the indecency of their own curiosity rather than the expressions I was compelled to use. I know that every decent-minded and devout person who reads this book or hears it read will readily forgive my frankness and applaud its purpose, namely, to help unbelievers, who argue solely from the data of personal experience, to grasp the unexperienced realities of faith. Any reader who is not shocked by the Apostle's plain talk in reference to the 'shame-

1 Cf. Virgil, *Georgics* 3.136, for the expression, *genitale arvum*.

ful lusts' of pagan women who 'have exchanged the natural use for that which is against nature,'[2] will certainly not be scandalized by any expressions of mine. After all, I have not called to mind any concrete obscenities even to condemn them, as the Apostle does. I am merely analyzing a certain element involved in human procreation and, like the Apostle in this, I am trying to avoid every word that might give offense.

Chapter 24

In Paradise, then, generative seed would have been sown by the husband and the wife would have conceived as need required, and all would have been achieved by deliberate choice and not by uncontrollable lust. After all, it is not only our hands and fingers, feet and toes, made up of joints and bones that we move at will, but we can also control the flexing and stiffening of muscles and nerves, as when we voluntarily wrinkle our face or pout with our lips. So, too, with the lungs, which are the most delicate of human organs next to the brain, and need the protection of a wall of ribs. Whether we inhale or exhale or make or modify sounds as in puffing, panting, talking, shouting and singing, the lungs obey our will as readily as the bellows obey a blacksmith or an organist. It is worth mentioning in passing that some of the animals can move their skin in a particular spot where something is felt that ought to be removed as when they shake off a fly or, in some cases, even expel a spear from where it is lodged. Merely because men have no such power is no reason why God could not give it to any animals He wanted to. Nor is there any reason why man should not have had control even over those lowly organs which have been so re-

2 Rom. 1.26.

bellious ever since man's own rebellion against God. As far as God is concerned, there was no difficulty in making men in such a way that organs which are now excited only by lust could have been completely controlled by deliberate choice.

Even as things are, everyone knows that there are human beings so unlike ordinary people that, whenever they want, they can do tricks with their bodies so unusual that practically no one can imitate them or even believe they can be done. Some people, for example, can make their ears move, either one at a time or both together. Others can make their scalp move backward or forward at will without any other movement of the head. There are people who can swallow an enormous number and variety of objects and then, by a slight contraction of the stomach, bring up as from a bag whichever object they want, and in good condition. Others can mimic so perfectly the voices of birds and beasts and other men that, unless they were seen, no one could tell the difference. There are individuals who can make musical notes issue from the rear of their anatomy, so that you would think they were singing. I knew a man myself who could raise beads of perspiration at will. Everyone knows that some people can shed an abundant flow of tears whenever they want.

Much more incredible is the phenomenon which used to occur quite recently, as many Christians of this neighborhood can testify. Restitutus was the parish priest of the Church of Calama. Whenever he heard sounds like those of a mourner wailing, he would collapse into unconsciousness and lie there so like a corpse that he could feel nothing when he was pinched or poked; not even when he was burned by a fire did he feel any pain except, later on, from the wound. He could do this at will and would be asked to do so by curious people who wanted to witness the phenomenon. And the proof that it was not self-control but insensibility that kept his body from

moving is the fact that there were no more signs of breathing in his body than in a corpse. However, if anyone spoke in a loud voice, he could hear the words coming, he would later recall, as from a long way off.

What all this proves is that, even now, when we are living with all the afflictions of a corruptible flesh, the human body can in certain cases be marvelously obedient in motions and conditions that transcend the normal course of nature and which show that there is no ground for disbelieving in the possibility that, before man sinned by rebellion and was punished by the rebellion of his passions, his human organs, without the excitement of lust, could have obeyed his human will for all the purposes of parenthood. The present condition merely proves that man was abandoned to his own weakness because he abandoned God in order to have his own way, and that once a man was disobedient to God he was bound to be disobedient to himself. It is this that makes our punishment so palpable. We have no longer the power to live as we choose, because, if we could, we would think we were happy —and that became impossible once we chose to be sinners.

Chapter 25

We have only to look at this last point a little more closely to realize that no man but one who is happy lives as he would choose to live, and that no one is happy unless he is holy. However, not even a holy man can live as he chooses to live until he reaches an abode where it is completely impossible for him to die or be deceived or suffer in any way, and where he is certain that this condition will continue forever. This is what his nature craves, and no nature can ever be perfectly at peace until it gets what it craves.

Here on earth no man can live as he longs to live, since

merely to live is in no man's power. Man longs to live but is forced to die, and how can any man be said to live as he longs to live who does not even live as long as he longs to live. Of course, if he should long to die, then he does not even long to live, let alone to live as he longs to live. And if his purpose in longing to die is not that he does not long to live but only that he longs to live better after he is dead, it is still true that he is not yet living as he longs to live, but will only be so living in the future when, by dying, he will reach what he longs for.

One last hypothesis. Here is a man who thinks he is living as he longs to live because he has demanded of himself and commanded himself to long only for what he can get and not to long for what is not to be had; as though he had followed the Terentian formula; 'Since you can't do what you will, will what you can.'[1] But, how can putting up with unhappiness make any man happy? The truth is that the happy life is one that must be loved, if it is not to be lost; and when this happy life is both loved and won, it is something that must be loved above everything else, for the simple reason that everything else that is loved is loved for the sake of this supremely lovable life. And if, moreover, the happy life is loved as much as it ought to be loved by the happy man (who, of course, would not be happy if he loved it less), then such a lover of happiness cannot but long for happiness to last everlastingly. Therefore, for life to be happy it must be eternal.

Chapter 26

Now, the point about Eden was that a man could live there as a man longs to live, but only so long as he longed to

1 Terence, *Andria* 2.1.5.

live as God willed him to live. Man in Eden lived in the enjoyment of God and he was good by a communication of the goodness of God. His life was free from want, and he was free to prolong his life as long as he chose. There were food and drink to keep away hunger and thirst and the tree of life to stave off death from senescence. There was not a sign or a seed of decay in man's body that could be a source of any physical pain. Not a sickness assailed him from within, and he feared no harm from without. His body was perfectly healthy and his soul completely at peace. And as in Eden itself there was never a day too hot or too cold, so in Adam, who lived there, no fear or desire was ever so passionate as to worry his will. Of sorrows there was none at all and of joys none that was vain, although a perpetual joy that was genuine flowed from the presence of God, because God was loved with a 'charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned.'[1] Family affection was ensured by purity of love; body and mind worked in perfect accord; and there was an effortless observance of the law of God. Finally, neither leisure nor labor had ever to suffer from boredom or sloth.

How in the world, then, can any one believe that, in a life so happy and with men so blessed, parenthood was impossible without the passion of lust? Surely, every member of the body was equally submissive to the mind and, surely, a man and his wife could play their active and passive roles in the drama of conception without the lecherous promptings of lust, with perfect serenity of soul and with no sense of disintegration between body and soul. Merely because we have no present experience to prove it, we have no right to reject the possibility that, at a time when there was no unruly lust to excite the organs of generation and when all that was needed was done by deliberate choice, the seminal flow

1 1 Tim. 1.5.

could have reached the womb with as little rupture of the hymen and by the same vaginal ducts as is at present the case, in reverse, with the menstrual flux. And just as the maturity of the fetus could have brought the child to birth without the moanings of the mother in pain, so could connection and conception have occurred by a mutually deliberate union unhurried by the hunger of lust.

Perhaps these matters are somewhat too delicate for further discussion. It must suffice to have done the best that I could to suggest what was possible in the Garden of Eden, before there was any need for the reins of reticence to bridle a discussion like this. However, as things now are, the demands of delicacy are more imperative than those of discussion. The trouble with the hypothesis of a passionless procreation controlled by will, as I am here suggesting it, is that it has never been verified in experience, not even in the experience of those who could have proved that it was possible. Actually, they sinned too soon and brought on themselves exile from Eden. Hence, today it is practically impossible even to discuss the hypothesis of voluntary control without the imagination being filled with the realities of rebellious lust. It is this last fact which explains my reticence; not, certainly, any lack of proof for the conclusion my mind has reached.

What, in any case, is certain is this, that God Almighty the ultimate and supremely good Creator and Ruler of all living creatures, the Giver of grace and glory to all good wills, and the God who abandons bad wills to the doom they deserve, was not without His own definite plan of populating the City of God with that fixed number of saints which His divine wisdom had ordained, even though the City had to be filled with citizens chosen from the ranks of a fallen human race. Of course, once the whole mass of mankind

was, as it were, cankered in its roots,[2] there was no question of men meriting a place in His City. They could only be marked out by His grace; and how great that grace was they could see not only in their own deliverance but in the doom meted out to those who were not delivered from damnation. For, no one can help but acknowledge how gratuitous and undeserved is the grace which delivers him when he sees so clearly the contrast between his privileged, personal immunity and the fate of the penalized community whose punishment he was justly condemned to share.

Here we have an answer to the problem why God should have created men whom He foresaw would sin. It was because both in them and by means of them He could reveal how much was deserved by their guilt and condoned by His grace, and, also, because the harmony of the whole of reality which God has created and controls cannot be marred by the perverse discordancy of those who sin.

Chapter 27

What I have just said applies to both angelic and human sinners. They can do nothing to interfere with 'the great works of God which are accomplished according to His will.'[1] God who both foresees all things and can do all things, when He distributes to each of His creatures their appropriate endowments, knows how to turn to good account both good and evil. Hence, there was no reason why God should not make a good use even of the bad angel who was so doomed to obduracy, in punishment of the sin that issued from the

2 . . . *universa massa tamquam in vitiata radice damnata.*

1 Cf. Ps. 110.2.

primal bad will, that a return to good will became for him impossible. This God did by permitting the bad angel to tempt the first man who had been created good, in the sense of having a will that was good by nature.

The point here is that the first man had been so constituted that if, as a good man, he had relied on the help of God, he could have overcome the bad angel, whereas he was bound to be overcome if he proudly relied on his own will in preference to this wisdom of his maker and helper, God; and he was destined to a merited reward if his will remained firm with the help of God, and to an equally deserved doom if his will wavered because of his desertion from God. Notice here that, whereas the reliance on the help of God was a positive act that was only possible by the help of God, the reliance on his own will was a negative falling away from favors of divine grace, and this was a possibility of his own choice.

There is an analogy to this in living. The act of living in a body is a positive act which is not a matter of choice but is only possible by the help of nourishment; whereas the choice not to live in the body is a negative act which is in our human power, as we see in the case of suicide. Thus, to remain living as one ought to live was not a matter of choice, even in Eden, but depended on the help of God, whereas to live ill, as one ought not to live, was in man's power; therefore, man was justly responsible for the cutting short of his happiness and the incurring of the penalty that followed.

Since, then, God was not without knowledge of man's future fall, He could well allow man to be tempted by the angel who hated and envied man. God was in no uncertainty regarding the defeat which man would suffer; but, what matters more, God foresaw the defeat which the Devil would suffer at the hands of a descendant of Adam, and with the help of

divine grace, and that this would be to the greater glory of the saints. Now, all this was so accomplished that nothing in the future escaped the foreknowledge of God, yet nothing in the foreknowledge compelled anyone to sin. God's further purpose was to reveal to all rational creatures, angelic and human, in the light of their own experience, the difference between the fruits of presumption, angelic or human, and the protection of God. For of course, no one would dare to believe or declare that it was beyond God's power to prevent the fall of either angel or man. But, in fact, God preferred not to use His own power, but to leave success or failure to the creature's choice. In this way, God could show both the immense evil that flows from the creature's pride and also the even greater good that comes from His grace.

Chapter 28

What we see, then, is that two societies have issued from two kinds of love. Worldly society has flowered from a selfish love which dared to despise even God, whereas the communion of saints is rooted in a love of God that is ready to trample on self. In a word, this latter relies on the Lord, whereas the other boasts that it can get along by itself. The city of man seeks the praise of men, whereas the height of glory for the other is to hear God in the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own boasting; the other says to God: 'Thou art my glory, thou liftest up my head.'[1]

In the city of the world both the rulers themselves and the people they dominate are dominated by the lust for domination; whereas in the City of God all citizens serve one another in charity, whether they serve by the responsibilities

1 Ps. 3.4.

of office or by the duties of obedience. The one city loves its leaders as symbols of its own strength; the other says to its God: 'I love thee, O Lord, my strength.'[2] Hence, even the wise men in the city of man live according to man, and their only goal has been the goods of their bodies or of the mind or of both; though some of them have reached a knowledge of God, 'they did not glorify him as God or give thanks but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened. For while professing to be wise' (that is to say, while glorying in their own wisdom, under the domination of pride), 'they have become fools, and they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things' (meaning that they either led their people, or imitated them, in adoring idols shaped like these things), 'and they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever.'[3] In the City of God, on the contrary, there is no merely human wisdom, but there is a piety which worships the true God as He should be worshiped and has as its goal that reward of all holiness whether in the society of saints on earth or in that of angels of heaven, which is 'that God may be all in all.'[4]

2 Ps. 17.2.
3 Rom. 1.21-25.
4 1 Cor. 15.28.

BOOK FIFTEEN

Chapter 1

REGARDING THE Garden of Eden, the happiness that was possible there, the life of our first parents, their sin and their punishment, a great deal has been thought, said, and written. In the foregoing Books I myself have said something on these subjects, setting forth what can be found in the text of Scripture and adding only such reflections as seemed in harmony with its authority. The discussion could be pursued in greater detail, but it would raise so many and such varied problems that I would need for their solution more books than our present purpose calls for; nor is there so much time at my disposal that I feel obliged to waste it in satisfying the curiosity of those persons with nothing to do who are more captious in putting their questions than capable of grasping the answers.

Actually, I think I have said enough on the really great and difficult problems concerning the origin of the world, the soul, and the human race. In regard to mankind I have made a division. On the one side are those who live according to man; on the other, those who live according to God. And I have said that, in a deeper sense, we may speak of two cities or two human societies, the destiny of the one being an eternal kingdom under God while the doom of the other is eternal punishment along with the Devil.

Of the final consummation of the two cities I shall have to speak later. Of their original cause among the angels whose number no man knows and then in the first two human beings, I have already spoken. For the moment, therefore, I must deal with the course of the history of the two cities from the time when children were born to the first couple until the day when men shall beget no more. By the course of their history, as distinguished from their original cause and final consummation, I mean the whole time of world history in which men are born and take the place of those who die and depart.

Now, the first man born of the two parents of the human race was Cain. He belonged to the city of man. The next born was Abel, and he was of the City of God. Notice here a parallel between the individual man and the whole race. We all experience as individuals what the Apostle says: 'It is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the spiritual.'[1] The fact is that every individual springs from a condemned stock and, because of Adam, must be first cankered and carnal,[2] only later to become sound and spiritual by the process of rebirth in Christ. So, too, with the human race as a whole, as soon as human birth and death began the historical course of the two cities, the first to be born was a citizen of this world and only later came the one who was an alien in the city of men but at home in the City of God, a man predestined by grace and elected by grace. By grace an alien on earth, by grace he was a citizen of heaven. In and of himself, he springs from the common clay, all of which was under condemnation from the beginning,[3] but which God held in His hands like a potter, to

1 1 Cor. 15.46.

2 . . . *ex damnata propagine exoritur . . . primo . . . malus adque carnalis.*

3 . . . *massa . . . quae originaliter est tota damnata.*

borrow the metaphor which the Apostle so wisely and deliberately uses. For, God could make 'from the same mass one vessel for honorable, another for ignoble use.'[4] The first vessel to be made was 'for ignoble use.' Only later was there made a vessel for honorable use. And as with the race, so, as I have said, with the individual. First comes the clay that is only fit to be thrown away, with which we must begin, but in which we need not remain. Afterwards comes what is fit for use, that into which we can be gradually molded and in which, when molded, we may remain.[5] This does not mean that every one who is wicked is to become good, but that no one becomes good who was not once wicked. What is true is that the sooner a man makes a change in himself for the better the sooner he has a right to be called what he has become. The second name hides the first.

Now, it is recorded of Cain that he built a city,[6] while Abel, as though he were merely a pilgrim on earth, built none. For, the true City of the saints is in heaven, though here on earth it produces citizens in whom it wanders as on a pilgrimage through time looking for the Kingdom of eternity. When that day comes it will gather together all those who, rising in their bodies, shall have that Kingdom given to them in which, along with their Prince, the King of Eternity, they shall reign for ever and ever.

Chapter 2

A shadow, as it were, of this eternal City has been cast on earth, a prophetic representation of something to come rather

4 Rom. 9.21.
5 . . . *prius est reprobum . . . posterius vero probum.*
6 Gen. 4.17.

than a real presentation in time. Yet this shadow, merely symbolic as it is and not the reality that is to be, is properly called the holy City. It was of these two cities, the one, as it were, in bondage to symbolic purpose and the other free, that the Apostle writes in the Epistle to the Galatians: 'Tell me, you who desire to be under the Law, have you not read the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave-girl and the other by a free woman. And the son of the slave-girl was born according to the flesh, but the son of the free woman in virtue of the promise. This is said by way of allegory. For these are the two convenants: one indeed from Mount Sinai, bringing forth children unto bondage, which is Agar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and is in slavery with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice thou barren, that dost not bear; break forth and cry, thou that dost not travail; For many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that has a husband." Now we, brethren, are the children of promise, as Isaac was. But as then he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave-girl and her son, for the son of the slave-girl shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Therefore, brethren, we are not children of a slave-girl, but of the free woman—in virtue of the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.'[1]

This exegesis, which comes to us with apostolic authority, opens up for us a way to understand much that is written in both Testaments, the Old and the New. We see that one portion of the world community became a symbol of the

1 Gal. 4.21-31.

heavenly City and was 'in bondage' in the sense that its significance was not in itself but in serving to signify the other city. It was, in fact, founded, not for its own sake, but as the shadow of another substance, a shadow that was itself foreshadowed by a previous symbol. For, the symbol of this shadow was Sara's handmaid, Agar, with her son. It was because shadows were to cease when the light came that the free woman, Sara, symbol of the free City (to which, in turn, the shadow served as another kind of prelude), uttered the words: 'Cast out this slave-girl with her son; for the son of this slave-girl shall not be heir with my son Isaac,'[2] or, to use the Apostle's expression, 'with the son of the free woman.'[3]

In the world community, then, we find two forms, one being the visible appearance of the earthly city[4] and another whose presence serves as a shadow of the heavenly City.

Notice that it is nature, flawed by sin, that begets all the citizens in the world community, whereas nothing but grace, which frees nature from sinfulness, can bring forth citizens of the heavenly City. The former are called 'vessels of wrath'; the latter, 'vessels of mercy.'[5] This distinction was symbolized in the two sons of Abraham. One, Ismael, was born of the slave-girl whose name was Agar and he was born according to the flesh. The other, Isaac, was born of the free woman, Sara, according to the promise. Of course, both were sons of Abraham, but he begot the one by a law suggesting the order of nature, while the other was born in virtue of a promise which pointed to the order of grace. What is clear in the one case is human action; in the other, divine favor.

2 Gen. 21.10.
3 Gal. 4.30.
4 It will be noticed that St. Augustine uses *civitas terrena* to mean both the community of earthly minded men and also the world community (which includes the City of God on earth).
5 Rom. 9.22,23.

Chapter 3

Sara, it will be recalled, was barren and without hope of offspring, but she set her heart on having through her maid's womb what she saw she could not have through her own, and, so, handed the girl over to her husband to become the mother of children which Sara longed in vain to bear herself. Thus it was that she exercised her right to have her husband do his duty by the use of a womb that was not her own. So it was that Ismael was born in nature's normal way of sexual intercourse. This is the meaning of the Scriptural expression, 'according to the flesh.' Of course, such births, too, are divine favors and are wrought by God, for His creative wisdom, it is said, 'reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly.'[1] But there is another kind of divine favor, the special gift of grace to which men have no claim; in order to symbolize this, another son had to be given in a way that transcended the ordinary processes of nature. Now, nature says 'no' when any couple as old as Abraham and Sara look for children from such intercourse as was possible at their age. In this case, the wife's barrenness made things worse. Even before age took away her fecundity, she had been incapable of motherhood even in her prime. The spiritual meaning here is this: Just as no fruit of posterity can be expected when nature is so affected, so no future reward can be expected when human nature has been so vitiated by sin that it was rightly condemned to the loss of true beatitude. Hence it is that Isaac, who was born in virtue of God's special promise, can be taken as a symbol of the children regenerated by grace, the citizens of the free city, in which they become fellow sharers of an eternal peace that excludes all love of merely individual self-will in favor of a love re-

1 Wisd. 8.1.

joicing in a common and immutable good and molding many souls into a single heart, into a perfect symphony of submissive love.[2]

Chapter 4

As for the city of this world, it is neither to last forever nor even to be a city, once the final doom of pain is upon it. Nevertheless, while history lasts, it has a finality of its own; it reaches such happiness by sharing a common good as is possible when there are no goods but the things of time to afford it happiness. This is not the kind of good that can give those who are content with it any freedom from fear. In fact, the city of man, for the most part, is a city of contention with opinions divided by foreign wars and domestic quarrels and by the demands for victories which either end in death or are merely momentary respites from further war. The reason is that whatever part of the city of the world raises the standard of war, it seeks to be lord of the world, when, in fact, it is enthralled in its own wickedness. Even when it conquers, its victory can be mortally poisoned by pride, and if, instead of taking pride in the success already achieved, it takes account of the nature and normal vicissitudes of life and is afraid of future failure, then the victory is merely momentary. The fact is that the power to reach domination by war is not the same as the power to remain in perpetual control.

Nevertheless, it is wrong to deny that the aims of human civilization are good, for this is the highest end that mankind of itself can achieve.[1] For, however lowly the goods of

2 . . . *ex multis unum cor faciens, id est perfecte concors obedientia caritatis.*

1 *Non autem recte dicitur ea bona non esse, quae concupiscit haec civitas, quando est et ipsa in suo humano genere melior.*

earth, the aim, such as it is, is peace. The purpose even of war is peace. For, where victory is not followed by resistance there is a peace that was impossible so long as rivals were competing, hungrily and unhappily, for something material too little to suffice for both. This kind of peace is a product of the work of war, and its price is a so-called glorious victory; when victory goes to the side that had a juster cause it is surely a matter for human rejoicing, and the peace is one to be welcomed.

The things of earth are not merely good; they are undoubtedly gifts from God. But, of course, if those who get such goods in the city of men are reckless about the better goods of the City of God, in which there is to be the ultimate victory of an eternal, supreme, and untroubled peace, if men so love the goods of earth as to believe that these are the only goods or if they love them more than the goods they know to be better, then the consequence is inevitable: misery and more misery.

Chapter 5

Now, the city of man was first founded by a fratricide who was moved by envy to kill his brother, a man who, in his pilgrimage on earth, was a citizen of the City of God. It need not surprise us, then, that long afterwards, in the founding of that city which was to dominate so many peoples and become the capital of that earthly city with which I am dealing, the copy, so to speak, corresponded to the original—to what the Greeks call the archetype. For, in both cases, we have the same crime. As one of the poets puts it: 'With brother's blood the earliest walls were wet.'[1] For Rome began, as Roman history records, when Remus was killed by Romulus,

1 Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.95.

his brother. However, in this case, both men were citizens of the earthly city. It was the ambition of both of them to have the honor of founding the Roman republic, but that was an honor that could not be shared; it had to belong to one or the other. For, no one who had a passion to glory in domination could be fully the master if his power were diminished by a living co-regent. One of the two wanted to have the whole of the sovereignty; therefore, his associate was removed. Without the crime, his position would have had less power, but more prestige. However, the crime made everything worse than before.

In the case of the brothers Cain and Abel, there was no rivalry in any cupidity for the things of earth, nor was there any envy or temptation to murder arising from a fear of losing the sovereignty if both were ruling together. In this case, Abel had no ambition for domination in the city that his brother was building. The root of the trouble was that diabolical envy which moves evil men to hate those who are good for no other reason than that they are good. Unlike material possessions, goodness is not diminished when it is shared, either momentarily or permanently, with others, but expands and, in fact, the more heartily each of the lovers of goodness enjoys the possession the more does goodness grow. What is more, goodness is not merely a possession that no one can maintain who is unwilling to share it, but it is one that increases the more its possessor loves to share it.

What, then, is revealed in the quarrel between Remus and Romulus is the way in which the city of man is divided against itself, whereas, in the case of Cain and Abel, what we see is the enmity between the two cities, the city of man and the City of God. Thus, we have two wars, that of the wicked at war with the wicked and that of the wicked at war with the good. For, of course, once the good are per-

fectly good, there can be no war between them. This much is true, however, that while a good man is still on the way to perfection one part of him can be at war with another of his parts; because of this rebellious element, two good men can be at war with each other. The fact is that in every one 'the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.'[2]

The spiritual longing of one good man can be at war with the fleshly passion of another just as fleshly passion in one man can resist spiritual tendencies in another. And the war here is much like that between good and wicked men. So, too, a good deal like the war of the wicked against the wicked is the rivalry of fleshly desires in two good men, and this will continue until grace wins the ultimate victory of soundness over sickness in both of them.

Chapter 6

Of course, even good men can be sick, suffering from that disobedience (discussed in Book XIV) which is the penalty of a primal disobedience which, therefore, is a wound or weakness in a nature that is good in itself. It is because of this wound that the good who are growing in grace and living by faith during their pilgrimage on earth are given the counsels: 'Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ,'[1] and elsewhere: 'We exhort you, brethren, reprove the irregular, comfort the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient towards all men. See that no one renders evil for evil to any man,'[2] and again: 'If a person is caught

2 Gal. 5.17.

1 Gal. 6.2.
2 1 Thess. 5.14,15.

doing something wrong, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted,'[3] and elsewhere: 'Do not let the sun go down upon your anger,'[4] and in the Gospel: 'If thy brother sin against thee, go and show him his fault, between thee and him alone.'[5] So, too, the Apostle gives the command: 'When they sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, that the rest also may have fear.'[6]

These are not the only reasons for the many careful precepts which have been given us such as those concerning mutual forgiveness and the encouraging of that peace which is the very condition of our seeing God.[7] One has only to recall the fearsome command given to the servant to pay the debt of the 10,000 talents from which he had been released, because he had not released his fellow servant from the debt of one hundred pence which he owed. When the Lord had proposed this parable, He added the words: 'So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if you do not each forgive your brothers from your hearts.'[8]

It is in this way that citizens of the City of God are given medicine during their pilgrimage on earth while praying for the peace of their heavenly fatherland. And, of course, the Holy Spirit is operative interiorly to give healing power to the medicine which is applied externally, for, otherwise, no preaching of the truth is of any avail. Even though God makes use of one of His obedient creatures, as when He speaks in human guise to our ears—whether to the ears of the body or to the kind of ears we have in sleep—it is only by His interior grace that He moves and rules our mind.

3 Gal. 6.1.
4 Eph. 4.26.
5 Matt. 18.15.
6 1 Tim. 5.20.
7 Heb. 12.14.
8 Matt. 18.35.

In doing this, God separates the vessels of wrath from the vessels of mercy. The dispensation by which He knows the one from the other is profoundly deep, yet no less just. It is He who, in His wonderful and hidden ways, helps us whenever that sin which has a home in our members and which, as the Apostle reminds us, is rather the penalty for previous sin, ceases so 'to reign in our mortal body that we obey its lust,' and whenever we 'do not yield our members to sin as weapons of iniquity.'[9] It is because God is ruling us that our soul is turned into a spirit that no longer yields to itself for its own ill but so orders us that our peace goes on increasing in this life until, when perfect health and immortality have been given us, we shall reign in utter sinlessness and in eternal peace.

Chapter 7

God spoke to Cain in the way He spoke to our first parents, namely, by using, as I have done my best to explain, a suitably created form to appear as a human companion. Yet, not even this was of any avail for Cain, for it was after he heard God's voice that he carried out his purpose of killing his brother. God made a distinction between the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, having respect for the one and disregarding the other and, undoubtedly, making the discrimination clear by some visible sign. God did so because Cain's deeds were evil and those of his brother were good. Cain was very much chagrined and ashamed. The narrative says: 'And the Lord said to him: "Why art thou angry? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou offerest rightly but do not rightly distinguish, hast thou not sinned? Be calm for unto thee will be his turning and thou shalt rule over him." '[1]

9 Cf. Rom. 6.12.

1 Cf. the quite different rendering of the Vulgate text, Gen. 4.6,7.

In this admonition or warning given by God to Cain, notice the clause: 'If thou offerest rightly but do not rightly distinguish, hast thou not sinned?' Its obscurity has occasioned many interpretations, because it is not clear how or why it came to be said, and thus each commentator on Scripture tries to explain the words as best he can, according to the rule of faith. Surely, a sacrifice is offered rightly when it is offered to the true God to whom alone sacrifice should be offered. One does not 'rightly disinguish' when one does not properly discriminate in the matter of place or time or victim or subject or object of the sacrifice or of those among whom what is offered up is distributed as food. Thus, 'distinguish' here means 'discriminate.' An offering can be made in a place where it should not be offered; or of a victim which should be offered in one place but not in another, or at a wrong time; or of a victim that should be offered at one time rather than at another; or an offering can be made that simply should not be offered anywhere or at any time; or there can be one in which a man keeps for himself what is choicer than what is offered to God; or a sacrifice may be indiscreet if a profane person or any other who is not entitled to participate eats of the victim.

Now, it is not easy to determine by which of these indiscretions Cain displeased God. However, a key may be found in the following words: 'not like Cain who was of the evil one, and killed his brother. And wherefore did he kill him? Because his own works were wicked but his brother's just.'[2] Here the Apostle John gives us to understand that the reason why God did not respect Cain's offering was that it was 'indiscreet' in this, that while he gave to God some possession that was his, he kept himself for himself. This, in fact, is what all those do who, following their own will rather than

2 1 John 3.12.

God's or living with a perverted rather than an upright heart, offer to God some gift by which they imagine He can be bribed to help them in satisfying their passions rather than in healing their infirmities.

Here we have the very heart of the earthly city. Its God (or gods) is he or they who will help the city to victory after victory and to a reign of earthly peace; and this city worships, not because it has any love for service, but because its passion is for domination. This, in fact, is the difference between good men and bad men, that the former make use of the world in order to enjoy God, whereas the latter would like to make use of God in order to enjoy the world—if, of course, they believe in God and His providence over man, and are not so bad as those who deny even this.

Now, once Cain knew that God had welcomed the sacrifice of his brother but had no regard for his, he should have made a change in himself in order to imitate his brother, but what he did was to yield to pride and emulation. He let himself yield to sadness and 'his countenance fell.' It is this sin of regret because some one else—in this case, his brother—is good that God, in a special way, held against Cain. It was this that God accused him of in asking: 'Why art thou angry? And why is thy countenance fallen?' What God saw was the envy toward his brother and it is for this envy that God reproaches Cain. To men, however, to whom the heart of a fellow man is hidden, it might be doubtful or quite uncertain whether Cain's sadness was contrition for his own wickedness which, as he knew, was displeasing to God or whether it was envy of the goodness by which his brother was pleasing to God when God had regard for his sacrifice. God explains why He refused to accept Cain's sacrifice. It was because Cain should have been rightly displeased with himself rather than wrongly displeased with his brother; God makes clear that,

unjust as Cain was in not 'distinguishing rightly' (in the sense of not living properly and of being unworthy to have his offering approved), he was far more unjust in hating his brother without provocation.

Nevertheless, God does not dismiss Cain without giving him some counsel which was holy, just, and good: 'Be calm; for unto thee will be his turning and thou shalt rule over him.' Must we suppose that 'over him' means 'over his brother'? Not at all. Surely it means 'over sin.' Notice that God had said: 'hast thou not sinned?' Then He added: 'Be calm; unto thee let *its* turning be and thou shalt rule over *it*.' There is no reason why we should not take the text to mean that the 'turning of sin' should be to the sinner in the sense that the sinner should realize that he alone, and no one else, is responsible for his sinning. And if we read 'let its turning be' rather than 'will be its turning,' we have the salutary medicine of penance and a suitable petition for pardon. We have only to suppose that the implied verb is in the imperative mood rather than in the future indicative. As for ruling over sin, each man will do that as soon as he subdues sin by his contrition and gives up defending it and so yielding to it. Otherwise, if a man offers protection to his sin, he will end as its slave.

If, on the other hand, we are to take sin to mean the kind of carnal concupiscence of which the Apostle says: 'The flesh lusts against the spirit,'[3] and of which he mentions envy as one of the fruits, then, since it was by envy that Cain was driven to kill his brother, we may well supply the verb 'will be' and read: 'Unto that will be its turning and thou shalt rule over it.' It is the movement of this carnal part of a man

3 Gal. 5.17.

that the Apostle calls sin in the text: 'Now it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me.'[4]

(It may be mentioned in passing that philosophers, too, call this part of the soul defective in the sense that it must not lead, but should be ruled by, the mind, and must be restrained by reason from doing what is wrong.) If, then, the carnal part is moved to commit some sin but is calmed into obedience to the counsel of the Apostle, 'do not yield your members to sin as a weapon of iniquity,' then it is 'turned' to the mind, it is tamed and subdued into submission to the rule of reason. It was this command which God gave to Cain when he was so enkindled in the flames of envy in regard to his brother that he longed to have the one whom he should have followed put out of the way. God said: 'Be calm,' that is, 'hold your hand from crime; let sin not reign in your mortal body and command obedience to its impulses; do not yield your members to sin as weapons of iniquity.' 'For unto thee will be its turning,' so long as you do not give it rein but bridle it, so long as you do not urge it on, but keep it calm. 'And thou shalt rule over it.' For, so long as no external action is permitted, it gets so used to the authority of the mind and the benevolent power of the will that even the interior movement is calmed.

A somewhat similar expression is found in the same inspired book in connection with Eve. After her sin, God questioned her and judged and condemned the Devil in the form of the serpent, and also herself and her husband. First God said: 'I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.' Then He added: 'And to thy husband will thy turning be, and he will rule over thee.'[5]

4 Rom. 7.17.

5 Gen. 3.16. The Douay translation reads: 'and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee.' The Confraternity translation reads: 'your husband shall be your longing, though he have dominion over you.'

What is said to Cain concerning his sin or the concupiscences of his corrupted flesh is, in the present text, said concerning the sinful woman. Thus we must conclude that a husband is meant to rule his wife as the spirit rules the flesh. This explains what the Apostle says: 'He who loves his own wife, loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh.'[6] Thus, a man's flesh, like his wife, is his own and as such is meant to be healed, not treated like something alien and condemned. In Cain's case, the command of God was received in a spirit of impenitence. The sickness of his envy grew worse, and he killed his brother. Such was the founder of the city of earth.

There is a sense in which Cain is a symbol of the Jews who killed Christ the Shepherd of men, as Abel, the shepherd of sheep, is also a prefiguring of Christ. But I shall refrain from discussing this here, because the sense is allegorical and prophetical. I refer the reader to a treatment of the subject in my work, *Against Faustus the Manichaean.*[7]

Chapter 8

Before proceeding further, it seems to me necessary to offer some explanation of the apparently incredible Scriptural story of a city built by a single man at a period, just after the fratricide, when, so far as we have evidence, there were no more than four men in the world. Actually, there seem to have been only three: the first man and father of us all, Cain himself, and his son Henoch, whose name was given to the city.

Those who find a difficulty here have failed to realize that the writer of this Scriptural story was under no obligation to mention the names of all who may have been alive at the

6 Eph. 5.29.
7 In 12.9.

time, but only of those whom the scope of his work required him to mention. All that the writer had in mind, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was to trace the succession in definite lines from Adam to Abraham and then from the children of Abraham to the people of God. The directing idea was that this people, as distinct from others, prefigured and preannounced what in the light of the divine Spirit the writer foresaw would be fulfilled in that City which is to continue eternally and in that City's king and founder, Christ. It is here that the Scripture make some mention of that other society, the city of man as I call it, but this is only in so far as was necessary to bring the City of God into clearer light by contrast with the city opposed to it.

Now notice that, when the inspired writer sets forth the length of the lives of the men he mentions, the narrative always ends with the formula: 'and he begot sons and daughters and all the time that so and so lived were so many years, and he died.'[1] Considering that these sons and daughters are not named and remembering how long people lived in that first period of our history, can any one refuse to believe that a multitude of men so great was born as to have been able, in groups, to build a great number of cities? But all this was beside the divine purpose which inspired these writings, namely, to summarize in a single narrative the earlier generations before the flood in the respective histories of the two cities which are so clearly interpenetrated and yet distinguished, the one peopled by men living a purely human life and the other by the sons of God, that is to say, by men obedient to the will of God. The distinction between the cities is made clear by mentioning apart the two lines of succession, one descending from the fratricide, Cain, and the other from Seth the son who was born to Adam to take the place of the

1 Cf. Gen. 5.4,5.

one killed by his brother. The interpenetration of the cities is revealed in the fact that the good were so corrupted that at last all men had to be swept away by the flood, with the exception of one just man whose name was Noe, together with his wife and three sons and daughters-in-law. These eight souls were found worthy to be saved in the ark from the flood which destroyed all other human beings.

Consider now the text: 'And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and brought forth Henoch; and he built a city and called the name thereof by the name of his son Henoch.'[2] It does not at all follow from these words that we must believe Cain's first son was Henoch, as though 'Cain knew his wife' must refer to their first intercourse. You have the same expression used of the first father, Adam, but not only in reference to the conception of Cain, who seems to have been his first-born, since a little later Scripture records: 'Adam knew his wife and she conceived and brought forth a son, and called his name Seth.'[3] What is clear is that we have here the usual Biblical expression to indicate human conception, although the expression is not always used nor is it restricted to the first marital intercourse.

Again, the fact that the city was named after Henoch does not compel us to conclude that he was his father's first-born son. Likely enough, the father had other sons, but for some reason he liked Henoch better than the rest. At any rate, Judah was not the first-born even though it was from him that Judea and the Jews get their names. But, even if we suppose that Henoch was the first-born son of the founder of the city, it does not follow that the name was given to the city at the time Henoch was born. For, of course, no city, that is, no large body of men held together by some bond

2 Gen. 4.17.
3 Cf. Gen. 4.25.

of association, could have been founded at that time by a single person. However, when Cain's family so increased in number as to form a large group, there is no reason why he could not then have begun to build the city and later, when the city was finished, have given it the name of his son. We have to remember that before the flood the human life-span was so long that of all those mentioned in the early chapters of Scripture the minimum age reached 753 years.[4] No one reached 1,000 but several passed their 900th year. Thus, there is no difficulty in seeing how a single man living that long could have so large a family of descendants as to people not merely one but many cities. The simple proof of this is the case of Abraham. From their single ancestor, in not much more than 400 years, the Hebrew people became so numerous that at the time of the exodus from Egypt there were, we are told, 600,000 men of military age.[5] This number does not include the Idumeans who were not reckoned with the people of Israel, although they were descended from Israel's brother Esau, who was a grandson of Abraham; nor does it include those other descendants of Abraham who were not of the line of his wife Sara.[6]

Chapter 9

The conclusion reached is that no one who carefully weighs the evidence can doubt that, in an age when the human life-span was so long, Cain could have built not merely a city but a large city. Of course, a skeptical unbeliever might raise a difficulty in regard to the length of human life which our

4 Gen. 5.31 in the Septuagint version gives 753 as the age of Lamech.
5 Exod. 12.37.
6 The Ismaelites and others descended from Agar and Cetura.

authorities attribute to the men of that period and, on this ground, deny our conclusion. A similar skepticism prevails in regard to the claim that men had far larger bodies then than now. Although, in this connection, we have the noblest of the pagan poets implying that once upon a time the earth used to produce bigger bodies than now. Recall his lines about the immense rock fixed in the ground as a landmark and which a man fighting one of the mighty battles of yore snatched up as he ran and then with a swing hurled at the enemy:

> A rock that no twelve men in modern days,
> Howe'er select, could to their shoulders raise.[1]

Surely, what is true of relatively recent times is much more so of the days before that flood of which all the world has heard. Actually, the size of ancient bodies has often enough been proved to the incredulous by old sepulchers which have been broken open by the ravages of time or torrents or otherwise and have exposed to view skeletons of immense proportions. Once, on the beach at Utica, I saw with my own eyes —and there were others to bear me witness—a human molar tooth so big that it could have been cut up, I think, into a hundred pieces each as big as one of our modern teeth. That tooth, however, I can well believe, was the tooth of a giant; and, of course, giants were much bigger than others even in the days when these others were bigger than we are, for there have never been lacking, then or now, specimens, however rare, of extraordinary stature. No less a scholar than Pliny the Elder holds it to be an historical law that, as progress advances, man's stature grows less.[2] He invokes the

1 *Aeneid* 12.899,900.
2 *Natural History* 7.16.

Homeric laments on declining size and, far from smiling at them as though they were poetical fancies, the historian of natural wonders accepts them as historical evidence. The real proof, as I have said, is to be found in the frequent discoveries of ancient bones of immense size, and this proof will hold good in centuries far in the future, since such bones do not easily decay.

Unfortunately, there is no such archaeological evidence to prove any particular case of longevity in the pre-flood period. This, however, is no excuse for skepticism, which in regard to the recorded facts of sacred history is particularly gratuitous, seeing how accurately and manifestly its predictions have come true. This much may be said, that it is no less an authority than Pliny who states that there exists today a people among whom the life-span is 200 years.[3] At least, no one who can believe the evidence for exceptional longevity in places too far away to be familiar should have any difficulty in regard to periods in the distant past. If it is rational to believe that what is not here may exist elsewhere, it is no less rational to believe in something in the past of which no evidence exists at present.

Chapter 10

It is true that in this matter of life-span there is some discrepancy, which I cannot explain, between what appears in the translation made directly from the Hebrew and what is given in the translations from the Greek.[1] However, these

3 *Ibid.* 7.49.

1 St. Augustine says *inter Hebraeos et nostros codices,* meaning St. Jerome's Vulgate and the older versions of the Septuagint Greek.

minor differences do not affect the common agreement on the fact of very long life-spans. Take the example of the first man, Adam, at the time when his son Seth was born. The ordinary translation gives the age as 230 years; the translation from the Hebrew says 130. So, too, for Adam's subsequent life. The former says he lived 700 years; the latter says 800. The sum total is the same in both cases. So, too, with the generations that followed Adam. Wherever there is mention of a birth, the age given for the father in the translation from the Hebrew is found to be 100 years short; whereas it is the number of years following the birth that is found to be 100 years short in the other versions. But, here again, the totals agree. In the sixth generation, however, there is no such discrepancy. Nevertheless, it reappears in the seventh in connection with Henoch, the man who was born but suffered no death because he was so pleasing to God. As in the first five generations, his age at the time the son who is mentioned was born differs by 100 years in the different translations, yet at the time he was translated he was, according to both translations, 365 years old. In the eighth generation, there is merely a minor discrepancy and it is of a different kind. The age of Henoch's son, Mathusala, at the time his successor was born, is given in the direct translation, not as 100 years too little, but as twenty years too much; but once more, in the popular version, the difference is adjusted in his later years, and the total is the same in both translations. The only discrepancy in the totals, and it is a slight one, occurs in the ninth generation, in regard to the age of Lamech the son of Mathusala and father of Noe. The translation from the Hebrew gives him twenty-four more years than is the case with the current version. At the time of Noe's birth, Mathusala's age is six years less in the former than in our version, but his subsequent years are given as thirty years more. Hence,

as I mentioned, there is a difference of twenty-four, that is, thirty minus six.

Chapter 11

It is from the discrepancy above described that there has arisen the famous problem of the age of Mathusala. If the calculation is correct, he must have survived the flood by fourteen years, yet Scripture does not mention his name among the eight who alone of all the inhabitants on earth escaped the flood. According to the texts in common use among us, Mathusala was 167 years old when he became the father of the son he named Lamech, and this Lamech was 188 before his son Noe was born. This gives a total of 355. Add to this 600, Noe's age in the year of the flood, and we get 955 years from Mathusala's birth to the year of the flood. Yet, by calculation, Mathusala's final age was 969. He was 167 when he became the father of Lamech, and after this he lived 802 years. This gives a total, as I mentioned, of 969. Take 955 (the number of years from Mathusala's birth to the flood) from 969 and we get fourteen, the number of years by which he is supposed to have survived the flood.

This has led some people to maintain that Mathusala did not remain on earth (where every creature that could not naturally live in water was destroyed) but that he dwelt with his father, who had been 'translated,' until the flood was over. Those who believe this do so because they are so unwilling to surrender their confidence in translations which have been accorded high authority by the Church that they are ready to believe that it must be the Hebrew texts, rather than the received translations, which are wrong. They do not admit that it is more likely that the translators have made a mistake than that there was an error in the original from which

our translation has come second-hand through a Greek translation. Instead, they maintain that it is impossible to believe that the seventy translators who worked simultaneously and produced identical translations could have made a mistake or could have deliberately changed the meaning in a matter where no self-interest was at stake. On the contrary, they suppose that it was the Jews, who envy us our translation of the Law and the Prophets, who actually changed their texts in order to diminish the authority of ours.

Each of us must decide for himself whether this is an opinion or a mere suspicion. What, however, is certain is that Mathusala did not survive the flood, but died that very year, if the numbers given in the Hebrew manuscripts are true. I have my own opinion concerning the seventy translators and I must be very careful to mention it in its proper place in so far as this present work may call for it, but that will be when, please God, I come to deal with the period when the translation was made.[1] For my present purpose it is enough to say that, according to both translations, the men of that early period lived so long that, during the single life-span of the first-born son of the two parents who, at the time of his birth, were the only parents on earth, the human race could multiply sufficiently to form a whole city.

Chapter 12

There are some who hold that in the early ages the length of what was reckoned as a year was no more than one-tenth of our present year. There is, however, no foundation whatever for the view that, when we read or hear that so-and-so lived 900 years, we should take that to mean ninety, on the

1 Cf. below, 18.42-44.

ground that ten of the ancient years made only one of ours, so that ten of ours would equal 100 of theirs. On this reckoning, Adam was thirty-three when Seth was born and Seth was only twenty years and six months old when Enos was born, although Scripture says 205. In the view I am discussing, the ancients are supposed to have divided the real year into ten parts and called each part a year. The number of days in each of these parts was six squared, the reason being that God finished the work of creation in six days so that He might rest on the seventh. (To this matter I gave some attention in Book XI.[1]) Now, six times six, or six squared, equals thirty-six, and thirty-six days multiplied by ten comes to 360 days or twelve lunar months. It takes five-and-a-quarter more days to make up the solar year. The quarter-days were taken care of by adding one day each fourth or leap year. The other days added were said by the Romans to be intercalated to fill out the full solar year. In the view I am discussing, Enos, son of Seth, was only nineteen years old when his son Cainan was born, though Scripture speaks of 190. So, for all the generations before the flood, hardly one of those who are mentioned in our texts as having a son was then less than 100 or even 120 years old. Actually, the minimum age mentioned at the time of fatherhood is a little more than 160 years. The reason of this, so it is said, is that no boy of ten (or, in Scriptural language, 100) is capable of fatherhood, whereas at sixteen (in Biblical language, 160) puberty is reached and procreation is now possible.

To clinch their argument, those who hold that the Biblical year was reckoned differently from ours adduce the testimony of many historians to the effect, for example, that the Egyptians had a year of four months, the Acarnanians one of six, the Lavinians a year of thirteen months. So, too, when Pliny

1 Cf., above, 11.8.

the Elder mentions that there are documents recording one man as living to be 152, a second to be 162, and others as reaching 200 or 300 or 500 or even 600 or, in rare cases, 800, he attributes this to ignorance of chronology. 'For,' says Pliny, 'there are some people who reckon summer and winter each as a full year; others, like the Arcadians, reckoned by seasons and so had years of three months.' Pliny further remarks that the Egyptians (who, as I mentioned above, ordinarily had years of four months) sometimes shortened their years to a single month. 'Thus,' he says, 'some Egyptians are said to have lived 1,000 years.'

It is by such arguments, which seem plausible enough, that certain people have persuaded themselves and have a right, they think, to persuade others that the original Biblical year was so short that it took ten of them to make one of ours, so that ten of our years would make 100 Biblical years. They have no intention, of course, of impugning the historicity of the Bible. On the contrary, what they want is to build a better case for credibility by explaining how such lengthy life-spans came to be recorded. But the simple fact is that their position can be demolished by a proof of the utmost cogency. This I shall give, but first I should like to mention that an even more plausible conjecture is possible.

One certain way of refuting the argument from puberty is to take the passage in the Hebrew text which states that Adam was not 230 but 130 years old when his third son was born. If this 130 really means thirteen, then he could not have been much more than eleven when he first became a father. Now, in the ordinary way of nature which is familiar to everyone, no one is capable of fatherhood at so early an age. This point, however, cannot be pressed, since Adam may have been capable of parenthood as soon as he was created. Certainly, no one can suppose that when he was created he

was no bigger than one of our babies. Take, then, Seth, Adam's son. He was not 205 (as the current versions have it), but 105, when his son Enos was born. According to our short-year theorists, he was not even eleven years old. The case of his son Cainan is still more awkward. Where our version has 170, the Hebrew text says he was 70 when he begot Malaleel. If seventy really means seven, then we are faced with an impossibility—a boy of seven becoming a father!

Chapter 13

As soon, however, as I appeal to the Hebrew text I shall be given the old argument mentioned above that the Jews must have falsified their text, since the seventy translators were men of such high reputation that they could not possibly have been guilty of falsification. To this I must answer with a question. Which is the more credible: that the whole Jewish people scattered far and wide could have agreed to a man to transcribe this forgery and, out of envy for others, deprive themselves of the truth; or that seventy men, all of them Jews and all in the same place (to which they had been called by King Ptolemy of Egypt for the task of translation) could have been the ones who envied the Gentiles this truth and by common consent committed the forgery? Anyone can see which of these possibilities is easier and more natural to believe. But, of course, both guesses should be scorned by any man of common sense. We should refuse to believe that any Jews, however perverse and malicious, could have tampered with so many manuscripts scattered throughout the world and we should equally refuse to believe that those seventy remarkable scholars could have conspired out of envy in a single purpose to deprive the Gentiles of the truth.

A more plausible explanation would be this. When copies first began to be made from the original in Ptolemy's library, some such misstatement may have found its way into the first transcription and from this source have spread far and wide, and this need not have arisen from any deliberate falsification on the part of the copyist. At least, this hypothesis would seem reasonable enough to solve the problem of Mathusala's life-span and would also serve to explain the case where there is a discrepancy of twenty-four years. The real difficulty is to explain the apparently systematic tampering with numbers so that, although totals agree, yet, for periods before the birth of an heir, while one version gives 100 years too much, this excess is absent from the other, and for the periods after the birth the excess is subtracted and the deficiency is made up in the respective versions. This is the case in all of the first five generations and also in the seventh. The repetition of this kind of mistake seems to be more by design than by accident.

My own conclusion is that the general discrepancy between the Greek and Latin texts on the one side and the Hebrew texts on the other—apart from this special case of the addition and substraction of 100 years in no less than six different generations—is not to be attributed to any malice on the part of the Jews in general or to any deliberate purpose on the part of the seventy translators, but simply to the carelessness of some scribe who made the first copy from the original in the royal library. The same thing happens often enough in our day. Where mere numbers do not focus attention on something which in itself is easy to understand or useful to know, they are rarely transcribed with accuracy, and mistakes once made are still more rarely emended.

Practically no one feels any interest in knowing just how many men each of the tribes of Israel contained, for the simple

reason that very few people see any use for such knowledge. In fact, very few men indeed have any awareness of the real usefulness of this knowledge.

The case is different where we find that for so many consecutive generations one text consistently adds 100 years which are missing in the other and then for the life-span after the birth of a son and heir where there was an excess of 100 years, the excess is subtracted and, where the 100 were missing, they now find a place, thus making the two totals agree. It seems to me to be likely that the scribe who added the 100 years must have been an apostle of the idea that Biblical longevity was the result of the shortness of the ancient year, and that he tried to prove his point by reference to the age of puberty at which procreation becomes possible. It was to help the incredulity of those who found a difficulty in the long life-spans that the scribe wanted to insinuate that 100 Biblical years meant ten of ours. When, however, on his own theory, he found paternity occurring before the age of puberty, all he could do was to add another 100 Biblical years. These, of course, he had to subtract from the life-span after the heir was born, so that the total age would be correct. His purpose was to find plausible ages at which fatherhood was possible, without falsifying the data in regard to total life-spans. The test comes in the sixth generation. There was here no need to make any addition and the scribe made none, which suggests that it was only when his theory called for the additional years that he put them in. In regard to the sixth generation the scribe found in the Hebrew original that Jared was already 162 years old when his son Henoch was born. Even in the theory of the shortness of Biblical years, 162 means that Jared was almost two months more than sixteen years old, and, therefore, old enough for paternity. Hence there was no need to add the

100 Biblical years which would have made Jared twenty-six in our reckoning. And, of course, since nothing was added to the age before Henoch was born, there was no need of a subsequent subtraction. Hence, in this instance, there is no discrepancy between the Hebrew original and the copy of the translation.

Another reason for suspecting this copyist is that in the eighth generation, for the period before Mathusala begot Lamech, while the Hebrew text gives us 182 years, our texts have a number twenty years less, and not, as we would have expected, 100 years more. This twenty is added to the period subsequent to the birth of Lamech to make the same total in both the original and the translation. Actually, there was here no need either to add or to subtract in order to reach an age like seventeen (170 in Biblical numbers) for puberty. The scribe in this case had before him an age sufficient for paternity, which was not so in the cases where he added his 100 years. We might well suppose, therefore, that this discrepancy of twenty years was attributable to a simple copyist's mistake, except that the twenty years subtracted are later carefully added in order to get a correct total. This suggests the possibility that there was here an astute design deliberately to cloak the previous trick of adding and subtracting 100 years, by adding and subtracting, in this case, not 100, but a random number which would keep up the appearance of a system.

All this is open to many interpretations. Whether we suppose or doubt that it happened in this way, or whether even the fact is so or not, one thing seems to me beyond all doubt. It is this. When there is any discrepancy in two versions, since both of them cannot be true to the facts, it is better to believe what we find in the original from which the translations have been made. This is confirmed when translations

agree with one another, as in the case of the three Greek, one Latin, and one Syrian translations, that Mathusala died six years before the flood.

Chapter 14

It is now time to examine the evidence which proves convincingly that the Biblical years, so far from being only one-tenth as long as ours, were precisely as long as the present solar years. This is true of the years used in giving those extremely long life-spans. It is said, for example, that the flood occurred in the 600th year of Noe's life. But, notice the full text: 'The waters of the flood overflowed the earth in the six hundredth year of the life of Noe, in the second month, in the twenty-seventh day of the month.'[1] Now those words are inexplicable if a year was so short that it took ten of them to make one of ours. That would mean that a year had only thirty-six days. For, so short a year (if it was actually called a year in ancient usage) either had no months at all, or, if it had twelve months, then each month could have had but three days. How, then, explain the words of the text, 'in the six hundredth year . . . in the second month, in the twenty-seventh day of the month,' unless the months then were the same as they are now. There is no other way of explaining how the flood could be said to have had a beginning on the twenty-seventh day of the second month.

So, too, when the flood was over, we are told: 'And the ark rested in the seventh month, the seven and twentieth day of the month upon the mountains of Armenia. And the waters were going and decreasing until the eleventh month; for in the eleventh month, the first day of the month, the

1 Gen. 7.10,11. St. Augustine has twenty-seventh for our seventeenth.

tops of the mountains appeared.'[2] But, if the months were then the same as now, it certainly follows that the years also were the same; for, of course, a three-day month could not have a 'seven and twentieth day.' Or must we say that the thirtieth part of a three-day month was called a 'day,' in order to keep the same proportion? In that case, we would have to conclude that the tremendous deluge which is said to have lasted forty days and forty nights was all over in less than four of our days. Surely, baseless absurdity of this sort is intolerable. This kind of error, which tries to build, on a foundation of false conjecture, faith in our Scriptures only to destroy it, is an error which should have no place among us.

The truth is that the day was then just what it is now, a period measured by the twenty-four hours in the course of a single daytime and nighttime. So, too, a month then was what it is now, a period fixed by the waxing and waning of the moon. The year also was the same then as now, a period of twelve lunar months plus the five days and a quarter required to complete the solar revolution. And it was on the twenty-seventh day of the second month of this kind of a year—which was the 600th of Noe's life—that the flood began; and the forty days of continuous rain which the Scripture records were not 'days' of a little more than two hours but periods of light and darkness each lasting twenty-four hours.

The conclusion is that some men of those ancient times reached an age of more than 900 years and these years were just as long as the years that made up Abraham's age of 170, and his son Isaac's age of 180, and then Jacob's age of nearly 150 and, some time later, Moses' age of 120, and as long as the years that, in our time, make up the age of men who live to be seventy or eighty or a little more and of

2 Cf. Gen. 8.4,5

which last years it is said, 'most of them are labor and vanity.'[3]

Whatever the discrepancy in the numbers given in the Hebrew original and in our translations, it does not affect their agreement in this matter of long life-spans in the early days. As to the discrepancy, if it is ever so great that both accounts cannot be true, then we must look for conformity to the facts in the original text from which our translations derive. And this is easy enough for anyone in the world who wants to do it. However, it is worth noticing that no one has in fact presumed to emend the version of the seventy translators in its many variations from the Hebrew original The reason is that the differences have not been considered deliberate falsifications, and with this view I whole-heartedly concur. Apart from the errors of copyists, there are discrepancies which may conform to and even emphasize the truth. In such cases, we may well believe that the translators were inspired by the divine Spirit to depart deliberately from the original, for along with their duties as scholars they had rights as prophets.[4] This explains why the Apostles rightly lend their authority not only to the Hebrew text but also to the Septuagint, as when they quote Scriptural texts from the latter. I have already promised to pursue this matter more carefully, please God, on some more appropriate occasion. But for the moment I must draw my present argument to its conclusion. It is this: There is no reason to doubt that, in an age when the life-span was so long, a great city could have been built by the first-born son of the first man, Adam. It was, indeed, merely an earthly city; it was not that city called the City of God which it is my main

3 For these ages see Gen. 25.7, 35.28, 47.28; Deut. 34.7; Ps. 89.10,

4 . . . *non interpretantium munere, sed prophetantium libertate aliter dicere voluisse credendum est.*

purpose to describe and which moved me to undertake the toilsome task of writing this very big book.

Chapter 15

Some one is bound to raise this difficulty: Must we, then, believe that men, who wanted to have children and were bound by no promise of continence, really abstained from marital relations for more than a hundred years or, if we take the smaller numbers in the Hebrew original, until they were eighty or seventy or even sixty? Or, if they did not abstain, must we believe that they remained that long in a state of impuberty? There are two solutions to this difficulty. One is that, when the life-span was longer, puberty began proportionately later. The other solution, which seems to me more satisfactory, is to believe that the sons mentioned are simply those heirs who were in the direct line of succession from Seth to Noe and then from Noe to Abraham and for some time thereafter, and who were needed to indicate the successive generations in the historical course of that most glorious City which even during its pilgrimage in this world keeps its heart ever set on its heavenly home.

What is undeniable is that Cain was the first man born of a man and woman. For, had he not been the first person added by being born to the two who had not been born, Adam could hardly have used the words he did when Cain was born: 'I have gotten a man through God.'[1] Cain was followed by Abel, who was killed by his brother and served as the first prophetic symbol of the City of God which, like an alien on earth, was destined to suffer cruel persecutions at the hands of the wicked men who can properly be called

1 Gen. 4.1.

natives of earth because they love this world as their home and find their happiness in the worldly felicity of the city of this world. However, we have no evidence to tell us how old Adam was when these sons were born.

After this, we have two lines of succession, one descending from Cain and the other from the son who was born to Adam in order to be the heir of Abel who was killed and to whom Adam gave the name of Seth. He is referred to in the words: 'God hath given me another seed, for Abel whom Cain slew.'[2] Thus it is that the two series of generations which are kept so distinct, the one from Seth and the other from Cain, symbolize the two cities with which I am dealing in this work, the heavenly City in exile on earth and the earthly city, whose only search and satisfaction are for and in the joys of earth. Nevertheless, in regard to the line of Cain's succession, of which eight generations including Adam are mentioned, there is no record of the age at which any particular individual became the father of his successor. It is as though the Spirit of God was unwilling to indicate with precise dates, at least before the flood, the sequence of succession in the city of earth, but reserved this privilege for the more noteworthy successions in the City of heaven. In the case of Seth, it is different. The age of his father is not omitted, even though other sons had been born before Seth. We are certain of two of these, Cain and Abel, but, for all any one knows, there may have been others. Certainly, from the mere fact that these two were the only ones that needed to be mentioned in order to show the sequence of successions, it does not follow that they were the only sons born to Adam. We know from the Scripture narrative that he was the father of sons and daughters and, although the names of all of these are cloaked in silence, it would be a rash man who would pre-

2 Gen. 4.25.

sume to declare just how many sons and daughters there were. For example, it is quite possible that when Adam was divinely inspired to say, after Seth was born: 'God hath given me another seed, for Abel whom Cain slew,' there is no implication here that Seth was the next born in the order of time but only that he was destined to be a fit heir in the order of holiness. So, too, in the case of Enos. Merely because Scripture tells us: 'Seth lived 205 years [or 105 according to the Hebrew original] and begot Enos,' only an uncritical overconfidence would claim that Enos was a first-born son.

Surely, then, we have a right to retort to those who find any difficulty here: How, indeed, could Seth have remained so many years unmarried or, if married, have had no children, since he had made no promise of continence? How, indeed, seeing that we are told expressly: 'He begot sons and daughters and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve, and he died.'[3] The same is true of all the others who follow and whose ages are mentioned. Scripture does not fail to mention that they 'begot sons and daughters.' That is why there is no evidence whatever for supposing that the sons mentioned were first-born sons and, in fact, it is impossible to believe that they were, for the simple reason that no one could believe that men who became fathers had remained so long either in impuberty or unmarried or unblessed with children.

The solution of the difficulty is that, the main purpose of the writer of sacred history being to indicate the chronology of the successive generations down to and including Noe, during whose life the flood occurred, there was no need to mention the earlier children of the various parents, but only those who were in the direct line leading to Noe.

3 Gen. 5.4,5.

To make this clearer by an example, let me take a case where what I say is undeniably true. The evangelist Matthew had the purpose of setting forth the line of parental descent ending in the human nature of our Lord. He traces first the sequence from Abraham to David and begins by saying: 'Abraham begot Isaac.'[4] He makes no mention of Ismael, who was his first son. Then we have 'Isaac begot Jacob.' Again, no mention of Esau, who was his first-born. Why were Ismael and Esau not mentioned? Simply because they were not in the line that led to David. The genealogy continues: 'Jacob begot Judas and his brethren.' Was Judas the first-born? And 'Judas begot Phares and Zara.' Now neither of these twins was his first-born, since before them there were three other sons. The point is that St. Matthew mentioned only the names of those in the direct line of succession, leading first to David and then from him to the one he had in view. This illustration ought to make clear that, of those ancient men before the flood, only those called for a mention who were in the direct line leading to the patriarch Noe. And, therefore, let no one worry about that obscure and otiose problem of their puberty.

Chapter 16

The first of all marriages was that between the man made out of dust and his mate who had issued from his side. After that, the continuance and increase of the human race demanded births from the union of males and females, even though there were no other human beings except those born of the first two parents. That is why the men took their sisters for wives.

4 Matt. 1.2.

But, of course, just as this is the best thing to do when natural necessity compels it, it becomes all the more wicked when moral obligation condemns it.[1] This can be proved as follows. The supreme human law is love and this law is best respected when men, who both desire and ought to live in harmony, so bind themselves by the bonds of social relationships that no one man monopolizes more than one relationship, and many different relationships are distributed as widely as possible, so that a common social life of the greatest number may best be fostered. Take the two relationships which are implied by the words, 'father' and 'father-in law.' Now, when a person has one man for a father and a second for his father-in-law, love can reign over a larger number. Adam, however, was obliged to monopolize in his single person this double relationship of love to his sons and daughters when, as brothers and sisters, they became husbands and wives. So, too, Eve, his wife, played the double role of mother and mother-in-law to her children of either sex, whereas, had there been two women available, one to be mother and the other to be mother-in-law, there would have been more strands in the bond of social love. So, too, a sister who had to become a wife was the bearer in her single person of two relationships of love. If these had been borne by two different persons, one a sister and the other a wife, then a greater number of persons would have had a share in the love of kinship. But there was then no possibility for this increase, since the only human beings were the brothers and sisters born of the first two parents.

But, as soon as, with an increased population, it became possible for men to choose wives who were not their sisters,

1 . . . *quod profecto quanto est antiquius compellente necessitate, tanto postea factum est damnabilius religione prohibente.* The translation takes *antiquius* in its classical meaning of 'better' or 'preferable.'

they were bound by the law of love to do so. Thus, once there was no necessity for the old arrangement, it ceased to have any moral validity. The reason is that the grandchildren of the first pair could now choose cousins for their wives, and, if they continued to marry sisters, then not merely two but three relationships of love which ought to be distributed would have been concentrated in a single person, in disregard for the duty of each to respect the right of love to have itself diffused, so that one love may hold together as many persons as possible. For, in this case, one person would be in relation to his own children—to a brother and sister become man and wife—not only as father and father-in-law but also as uncle; and his sister-wife, in relation to his and her children, would be mother and aunt and mother-in-law; and the children of a brother and sister would be in relation to one another not only as brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives, but also as cousins. Now, instead of concentrating three relationship in a single person, there could have been nine relationships of love diffused over nine persons, so that a man could have been linked in love to one person as his sister, to another as his wife, to a third as his cousin, to a fourth as his father, to a fifth as his uncle, to a sixth as his father-in-law, to a seventh as his mother, to an eighth as his aunt, and to a ninth as his mother-in-law. Thus, the love which holds kindred together, instead of being narrowed to a few, could have opened its arms to embrace a greater number of people spread over a far wider area.

Now that the human race has increased and multiplied, we find this law of love well observed even among the pagan worshipers of many and false gods. There are, indeed, occasional perversions of law which allow brothers and sisters to marry, yet by custom men's lives are so much better than these laws that such license is utterly repudiated; so that,

allowable as it was in the very earliest ages to marry one's sister, the practice is today just as abominated as though it could never have been permitted. In general, custom has great power both in provoking and preventing the play of human passion. In this matter, custom keeps concupiscence in bounds and, therefore, any detraction from or destruction of custom is branded as criminal. Thus, unjust as it is to encroach, out of greed, on another's property, it is still more wicked to transgress, out of lust, the limits of established morals. In fact, I have noticed how rarely custom allows even in our days what is permissible in law, namely, marriages between first cousins, who are the nearest in consanguinity after brothers and sisters. The divine law has not forbidden this nor, so far, has human law. Nevertheless, custom has disapproved of something that is right, simply because it is too near to what is wrong. After all, a marriage with a cousin looks almost like one with a sister; because, by custom, cousins who are so closely related are called brothers and sisters; and they almost are so.

It is true that our ancestors had a religious regard for kinship and, being afraid that it might be lessened and lost in the course of successive generations, they tried to hold on to it by the bond of marriage and, as it were, to call it back before it got too far away. So it was that, when the world was fully populated and there was no more marrying of sisters or half-sisters, people still preferred to marry within their own clan. No one, however, can doubt that the modern attitude toward the marriage even of cousins is morally sounder. First, there is the argument I have already outlined, namely, that it is socially right to multiply and distribute relationships of love and wrong to have one person needlessly monopolizing two relationships which could be distributed to two persons and thus increase the community of kinship. There is

also the argument from that indefinably precious modesty of our human nature which makes even the purest of parents to blush over the element of lust in the generative act and which bridles this desire when a double respect is due to a partner by reason of close consanguinity.

The union of male and female is, then, so far as mortal living goes, the seed-bed, so to speak, from which a city must grow; but, while the city of earth needs only human generation, the City of heaven demands a spiritual regeneration to escape from the taint of the generative act. Of this regeneration, whether in the period before the flood there was any material and visible sign (like the circumcision which was later enjoined on Abraham) or, if so, what that sign was, Scripture does not tell us. Scripture does say, however, that those earliest men offered sacrifice to God, and we have clear examples of this in the case of the first two brothers. It is related, too, of Noe that he offered victims to God as soon as he issued from the ark after the flood. On this matter of sacrifices, I have pointed out in some of the previous Books that the reason why the demons, who arrogate to themselves divinity and seek to be recognized as gods, demand sacrifices and delight in such worship is that they know that true sacrifice is due to the true God.

Chapter 17

Adam, then, was the ultimate father of two lines of succession, one of which was that of the earthly city and the other was that of the heavenly City. But, from the time when the death of Abel revealed itself as a marvelous symbol of the persecuted City of God, each of the two lines had its own father, Cain being father of the one and Seth of the

other. It was in their sons who were to be mentioned in Scripture that we begin to see more clearly the specific characteristics of the two cities as they appear in this mortal life.

Cain became the father of Henoch and gave Henoch's name to the city he built. It was a city of earth, at home and not in exile in the world, a city satisfied with such temporal peace and joy as is possible here. Note that the name Cain means 'ownership,' which explains what was said at the time of his birth by his father or mother: 'I have come into possession of a man through God.'[1] So, too, Henoch means 'dedication'; because the city of earth is dedicated to earth, it possesses here the ultimate good it wants and strives to get. Seth on the other hand, means 'resurrection,' and the name of his son Enos means 'man.' The name Adam also means 'man,' but in Hebrew it can be used for any human person, either male or female, as one can see from the text: 'He created them male and female; and blessed them and called their name Adam.'[2] This text leave no doubt that Eve was given her proper name, whereas the common noun, 'adam,' or 'human being,' applied to both Adam and Eve. It was different with the name Enos. This means 'man,' Hebrew scholars tell us, in the sense of a man as distinguished from a woman. Thus, Enos was a 'son' of 'resurrection,' and in the resurrection 'they neither marry nor take wives,'[3] for there is no generation where regeneration leads to resurrection. That is why, I think, it is not irrelevant to remark that, although 'sons and daughters' were born in the generations that sprang from Seth, no name of any woman is mentioned; whereas, among the descendants of Cain, we find that at the very end of the line, the last name mentioned is that of a woman.

1 Cf. Gen. 4.1.
2 Gen. 5.2.
3 Luke 20.35.

The text runs: 'Mathusael begot Lamech, who took two wives: the name of one was Ada, and the name of the other Sella. And Ada brought forth Jabel: who was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of herdsmen. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of them that play upon the harp and the organs. Sella also brought forth Tubalcain, who was a hammerer and artificer in every work of brass and iron. And the sister of Tubalcain was Noema.'[4] This is as far as the line of descent from Cain is carried. There are eight generations in all, including Adam. The seventh is that of Lamech, who was the husband of two wives; the eighth is that of his children, among whom is the woman who is mentioned by name. What is here delicately intimated is that to the very end of its existence the earthly city will be propagated by physical births proceeding from the union of the sexes. That is why we are given the proper names of the wives of the last man mentioned as begetting children—a practice unheard of before the flood, except in the case of Eve.

There is likewise a symbolical interpretation of the fact that Cain means 'ownership' and Henoch means 'dedication.' 'Ownership' was the originator of the city of earth and 'dedication' was the name given when the building ended—as though to indicate that both in its origin and end that city is earthly, that in the earthly city there is nothing to be hoped for beyond the things that can be seen in the world of time. Contrast this with the name of Seth, which means 'resurrection.' 'Resurrection' is the father of those generations which are mentioned apart from the others. That is why we must examine more closely what is said in sacred history of the 'son of resurrection.'

4 Gen. 4.18-22.

Chapter 18

Consider the text: 'But to Seth was also born a son, whom he called Enos: this man hoped to call upon the name of the Lord.'[1] Here, indeed, is a witness that shouts out the truth. The 'son of resurrection' is a man who lives in hope. The City of God, which is the child of faith in the Resurrection of Christ, lives in hope so long as its pilgrimage on earth endures. Abel means 'sorrow' and the name of Seth, his brother, means 'resurrection.' Thus, these two are prophetic symbols of the death of Christ and of His resurrection from the dead. And it is from faith in the Resurrection that the City of God is born—the City in the sense of mankind hoping to 'call upon the name of the Lord.' 'For in hope,' says the Apostle, 'were we saved. But hope that is seen is not hope. For how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.'[2]

It is surely difficult for anyone not to see in this a mystery of great depth. Certainly, Abel, too, 'hoped to call upon the name of the Lord,' since Scripture records that it was his sacrifice which was so pleasing to God. And, certainly, Seth also hoped to call upon the name of the Lord, for it is of him that we read: 'God hath given me another seed, for Abel whom Cain slew.'[3] Yet, this calling on the name of the Lord which is common to all men of God is especially attributed to Enos. The reason must be that he was particularly destined to be a symbol of man, in the sense of a community of men, living not according to man in the present possession of temporal enjoyment but according to God in the hope of eternal beatitude. This was appropriate,

1 Gen. 4.26.
2 Rom. 8.24,25.
3 Gen. 4.25.

since he is mentioned as the one in whom there began those generations which descended from his father, and are distinguished by their destiny to a better lot, that is, to a share in the City which is above. Notice that it does not say 'He hoped in the Lord God,' or 'He called on the name of the Lord God,' but 'He hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God.' Surely, this 'hoped to call' must be taken to intimate that we have here a prophecy of a future people who would be able, in virtue of their election to grace, to call upon the name of the Lord God. At any rate, the Apostle takes these words as they appear in the Prophet Joel, 'and every one that shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,'[4] and applies these words to the people who share in the grace of God.[5]

What we learn from the words, 'He called his name Enos' (which means 'man') and those that follow, 'this man hoped to call on the name of the Lord God,' is that man should not place his hope in himself or that, as we read in another text, 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.'[6] From this we conclude that no one ought to depend on his own power to become a citizen of that other City which is not dedicated in our present time, as Cain's son was 'dedicated,' namely, in the fleeting course of human history, but is consecrated in the immortality of unending beatitude.

Chapter 19

This other kind of 'consecration' appears in that other line of descent which is from Seth, for the name 'consecration'

4 Joel 3.32.
5 Rom. 10.13.
6 Jer. 17.5.

appears in the seventh generation from Adam. Henoch means 'consecration,' and Henoch is the seventh in line after Adam. This is the man who was transferred or 'translated' because he pleased God; the fact that he was in the seventh generation from Adam is significant since the Sabbath was consecrated on the seventh day. Counting from Seth, the father of the descendants who are distinguished from those of Cain, Henoch was in the sixth generation; it was on the sixth day that man was created and God brought to a consummation all the works He had begun. Now, the transferring of this 'consecration,' Henoch, is a foreshadowing of the deferring of our consecration. It is true that our resurrection has already been consecrated in Christ our Head, who so rose from the dead that He can die no more, and who Himself was also transferred. However, there still remains the consecration of the whole 'House' of which Christ is the foundation; and this consecration is deferred to the end of time, when there is to be the general resurrection of all those who are to die no more. And when we say it is the 'House of God' that is consecrated we mean the 'Temple of God' or the 'City of God,' for it is good usage to employ 'house' or 'family' for a larger human association. Thus, Virgil (writing in Latin) calls the empire-wide citizenry of Rome the 'house of Assaracus,' on the ground that all Romans are supposed to be descended through the Trojans from Assaracus. Virgil also calls the Romans the 'house of Aeneas,' because is was under the leadership of Aeneas that those Trojans came to Italy who built Rome. In this matter the poet accords with Holy Scripture, in which the immensely expanded Hebrew people is spoken of as 'the house of Jacob.'

Chapter 20

Someone will ask the question: What was the intention of the writer of sacred history in mentioning the generations that descended from Cain, and how far did he intend to continue that line of succession? For, surely, his primary intention was to follow the line of Adam through Seth as far as Noe, in whose time the flood occurred, and then to resume the line of succession as far as Abraham, from whom Matthew traces the line which ends in Christ, the eternal King of the City of God.

To one part of the question—How far did the writer intend to continue the line of Cain?—the answer is: As far as the flood. It was by this that the whole population of the city of earth was destroyed, to be replaced, however, by some of the descendants of Noe, because the city of earth, the society of men who live according to man, cannot be completely depopulated until the end of that world which our Lord had in mind when He said: 'The children of this world marry and are given in marriage.'[1] In contrast to this, it is by regeneration that the City of God, at the end of its pilgrimage in this world, will enter another world whose children neither marry nor are given in marriage.

In this present world, of course, marrying and being born are common to both cities. However, many thousands of those who are in the City of God on earth abstain from the function of human generation; in fact, there are some in the other city who erringly follow this example. Among these are some of the heretics who have fallen from the faith of the City of God into the city of man and now live according to man and not according to God. There are also the 'gymnosophists,' those naked philosophers in the solitudes

1 Luke 20.34.

of India who abstain both from eating food and begetting children. I said 'erringly,' because such abstention is not good in itself, but only when inspired by faith in God, who is the Supreme Good. There is no evidence that anyone before the flood practiced such continence, not even Henoch himself, who was in the seventh generation after Adam, and who was taken away to God without dying. Thus Henoch, before this 'translation,' became the father of sons and daughters and, particularly, of Mathusala who continued the series of recorded generations.

But why, then, it will be asked, if the line of Cain was meant to end with the flood and if there was none of that long period of impuberty that was supposed to make procreation impossible for a hundred years of more, why are so few generations mentioned in the line of Cain? In the case of the line of succession from Seth, the sacred writer clearly intended to trace the direct succession as far as Noe and then to resume the direct line and continue it; but, if there was no such intention in regard to the line from Cain, what need was there to pass in review the first-born sons and so come to Lamech and his children in whom the line ends? This was the eighth generation from Adam and the seventh from Cain. But, surely, there was no way for the writer to find any connecting link which could allow him to continue the line down to the time when the people of Israel in the terrestrial Jerusalem served as a prophetic type of the heavenly City; or, still less, to continue the line as far as 'the Christ, according to the flesh, who is, over all things, God blessed forever,'[2] the Maker and Monarch of the heavenly Jerusalem. What, then, could possibly have been the writer's intention, since, as a fact, the complete posterity of Cain was destroyed in the deluge? It is evident that in this succession from Cain it is

2 Rom. 9.5.

the first-born sons who are listed. Why, then, are there so few of them? There must have been more than seven generations between Cain and the flood, unless we suppose either that in those days lateness of puberty was in proportion to longevity, or that those early fathers abstained from procreation for the first hundred years. But, if we assume that, on an average, they were thirty years old when they became fathers, then the eight generations from Adam to Lamech and his children give us eight times thirty or only 240 years. Must we then suppose that, after that and until the flood, they produced no more children? And if we must not, why in the world was the writer unwilling to mention these subsequent generations? Just think, from Adam to the flood there were 2,262 years according to the calculation from the data in our versions of the Scripture; or, if we use the Hebrew original, 1,656. Even supposing the lesser number is the more accurate, and subtracting 240 from 1,656, we have more than 1,400 left before the flood. Now, can anyone believe that during all those years the whole posterity of Cain could have abstained from procreation?

If anyone is disturbed by this argumentation, let him remember what I said when I discussed the difficulty of believing that primitive men could have abstained so long from procreation. I said there are two solutions. One is to suppose that their puberty was late in proportion to their longevity. The other is that the sons mentioned in the genealogies are not the eldest sons but those in the direct line leading to the particular descendant whom the writer has in mind, as, for example, Noe in the descent from Seth. If it is a fact that the writer had no intention of reaching a particular person by substituting picked persons in the direct line for first-born sons, then, of course, we must fall back on the hypothesis of late puberty. In that case, we must suppose that

the men only became capable of fatherhood at some age over 100, that the line of succession was through the first-born, and that eight generations were enough to fill the long period up to the flood.

There is, however, another possibility. There may have been some hidden reason, which escapes me, why the sacred writer should have traced the line of succession in what I have called the earthly city as far as Lamech and his children and then have left the succeeding generations down to the deluge to go unmentioned. There may be a reason, too, why the line of succession was not traced through the first-born sons, namely, that the city which Cain founded and called Henoch may have developed into a far-flung kingdom under a single king reigning for his whole life and then leaving his heir as his successor. Of these kings Cain would have been the first and his son Henoch, whose name was given to the city where he was to reign, the second; the third, Henoch's son Gaidad; the fourth, Gaidad's son Mevia; the fifth, Mevia's son Mathusael; the sixth, Mathusael's son Lamech, who was in the seventh generation from Adam through Cain.

In this supposition there is no need for the hypothesis of delayed puberty, since there was no need to have first-born sons succeeding their fathers. The successors could have been chosen on a basis of worth in terms of usefulness to the earthly city, or they could have been chosen by lot, or the best-loved son of his father may have had a kind of right of succession to the throne. There is, here, no difficulty about Lamech being alive and reigning at the time the flood occurred and destroyed him and all others, with the exception of those in the ark. Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that the number of generations in the two lines is different —seven from Cain and ten from Seth—considering the length of time from the beginning to the flood and the great

variation of individual ages. Lamech, then, as I said, was in the seventh generation in his line from Adam, and Noe in the tenth in his. The reason why, in the special case of Lamech, several sons are mentioned is that it was not certain which of his sons would succeed if he had died and there was time enough before the flood for another reign.

But, whatever may have been the arrangement in regard to the line of succession from Cain, whether it went by primogeniture or by chosen kings, there is one circumstance which seems to me so important that it must be mentioned, namely, that, besides Lamech, whose name was listed seventh after Adam, there were enough names mentioned, including the three sons and one daughter, to bring the total up to eleven, the number which is a symbol of sin. The wives, too, may have some meaning beyond the one I am at present suggesting in connection with the line of succession, but in this connection the names of the wives are irrelevant. My point is that, just as law in general, and the Decalogue in particular, is symbolized by the number ten, so the number eleven which goes beyond ten, *transgreditur denarium,* stands for a transgression of the law and, therefore, for sin. This explains why the number of haircloth curtains prescribed to cover the top of the tabernacle of the testimony, of that traveling temple, so to speak, of the people of God in their wanderings, was eleven.[3] The haircloth, made of goats' hair, was a reminder of sins because of the goats that were to be kept on the left. So, too, when we confess our sins, we kneel down in haircloth as though to express the thought in the psalm: 'And my sin is ever before me.'[4]

Thus, it is that the descendants of Adam through Cain, the transgressor, end on the number eleven, the symbol for trans-

3 Exod. 26.7.
4 Ps. 50.51.

gression. And, as the last in that number is a woman, so was it by a woman that the first sin was committed, the one which brought death to us all. But, the first consequence that followed the committing of that sin was the concupiscence of the flesh, the pleasure which resists our spirit. Now, Noema was the daughter of Lamech, and her name means 'pleasure.'

On the contrary, it is the number ten, symbol of law, that is linked with the line from Adam through Seth to Noe. Noe had three sons and, though one of them sinned, the other two were blessed. Discounting the sinner and adding the two who were blessed to the number ten, we get twelve, the number which has been made significant by connection with both the Patriarchs and the Apostles, and also by the fact that, as you get seven by adding four and three, so you get twelve by multiplying them.

That is all I need say on this point. The next matter to be mentioned and discussed is how the two lines of succession, which at first were kept distinct and so symbolized the respective cities of the worldly and the regenerate, later became so mingled and indistinguishable that the whole human race, with the exception of eight persons, deserved to perish in the deluge.

Chapter 21

The first point to notice is this. In giving the line of succession from Cain, the first name mentioned before all others is that of Henoch, the son whose name was given to the city, and then the line is continued to the last name, which I have spoken of, that is, until both Cain's direct line and all his other descendants were swept away by the flood. It is different with the line of Seth. As soon as the name of one

son has been mentioned, namely, Enos, and before continuing the genealogy to the flood, the narrative interposes the following clause: 'This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day that God created man he made him to the likeness of God. He created them male and female; and blessed them and called their name Adam in the day when they were created.'[1]

The reason for this break was, I take it, that the writer, as though bidden by God, was unwilling to have the beginning of world chronology reckoned from the earthly city, and so he deliberately went back to Adam for a new beginning.[2] If we ask why this return to recapitulate was made immediately after mentioning Seth's son, the man who hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God, the answer must be that this was the proper way to present the two cities. The one begins and ends with a murderer, for Lamech, too, as he admitted to his two wives, was a murderer. The other City begins with the man who hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God, for the invocation of God is the whole and the highest preoccupation of the City of God during its pilgrimage in this world and it is symbolized in the one 'man' (Enos) born of the 'resurrection' (Seth) of the man who was slain (Abel). That one man, in fact, is a symbol of the unity of the whole heavenly City, which is not yet in the fullness which it is destined to reach, and which is adumbrated in this prophetic figure.

The son of Cain, that is, the son of 'possession'—and, of course, possession means earthly possession—this son of Cain is welcome to have a name in the earthly city which was founded in his name, for that city is peopled with the kind

1 Gen. 5.1,2.

2 Taking the reading of E. Hoffmann (CSEL), *tamquam eum Deus sic commoneret, ut non conputaret,* not the reading, *tamquam eam deus sic commemoraret.*

who are spoken of in the psalm: 'They have called lands by their own names,'[3] and who, therefore, suffer the consequences mentioned in another psalm: 'Lord, in thy city thou wilt bring their image to naught.'[4] But, meanwhile, let the son of Seth, the son of 'resurrection,' hope to call on the name of the Lord God, seeing that he prefigures that human society that can say of itself: 'But I, like a blooming olive tree in the house of God have put my trust in the mercy of God.'[5] Let him not seek the empty renown of a famous name on earth, because 'Blessed is the man who has put his trust in the Lord and has no regard for vanities and lying follies.'[6]

The chronology of the two cities is begun only when both cities have been presented to the reader as issuing from that single gate of our mortality which Adam opened. One is the city of 'belongings' here in this world; the other is the City of 'longings' for God.[7] Once started on their way, they take different roads, each to the proper doom or destiny it deserves. One undated sequence of generations is given, but all generations are traced back to Adam, out of whom, as out of a single mass of damaged clay thrown on a waste-heap, God fashions two kinds of pottery: the vessels fashioned by His wrath and fit only for contempt and the vessels made by His mercy and meant to be honored. To the former He pays in punishment the doom they earn; to the latter He bestows, as a gift of grace, a destiny they never could have deserved.[8] God's purpose in this is that the heavenly City,

3 Ps. 48.12.
4 Cf. Ps. 72.20.
5 Cf. Ps. 51.10.
6 Cf. Ps. 39.5.
7 . . . *una in re huius saeculi, altera in spe Dei.*
8 . . . *Adam, ex cuius origine damnata, veluti massa una meritae damnationi tradita, facit Deus alia in contumeliam vasa irae, alia in honorem vasa misericordiae, illis reddens quod debetur in poena, istis donans quod non debetur in gratia.*

during its exile on earth, by contrasting itself with the vessels of wrath, should learn not to expect too much from the freedom of the power of choice, but should trust in the 'hope to call upon the name of the Lord God.' It is true, indeed, that the human will resides in a nature that was created good because its Creator is good, but that nature is mutable even though its Maker is immutable, for the simple reason that is was made out of nothing. Therefore, when the will turns from the good and does evil, it does so by the freedom of its own choice, but when it turns from evil and does good, it does so only with the help of God.

Chapter 22

It was by the exercise of this freedom of the will's choice that, with the progress of mankind and an increasing population, the two cities became, first, intermingled, and, then, almost indistinguishable as a consequence of their common depravity. Once more the root of the wickedness was found in the weaker sex. There was this difference, however. It was not that the women were first seduced and then led the men into sin. It was the sons of God, the citizens of the other City on pilgrimage in this world, who fell in love with the physical beauty of the women who belonged to the worldly society of the earthly city and who had been living in corruption from the beginning. Their beauty, in itself, was a gift of God, but it is the kind of gift which God gives even to the wicked so that good men may realize how slight a good it is. Thus it is that, once the sons of God lost their hold on the really great good that is appropriate for holy men, they slipped to a very lowly good, not reserved for good men alone but open to good and bad alike, and, so, falling

in love with the daughters of men, the sons of God wanted them as wives, and, losing their hold on the holiness which had sustained them in their holy society, they slipped into the ways of the worldly society.

Thus it is that bodily beauty, created as it is by God, is still but a lowly good, fleeting and fleshly, and cannot be loved without sin if it is preferred to God, who from eternity to eternity is Goodness itself. So it is when gold is so loved by a miser that he forgets what he owes to justice. There is nothing wrong with the gold, but there is with the miser. So it is with any created thing. Although it is good, it can be loved both well and ill—well when due order is observed and ill when that order is disturbed. I once put this idea into a little hymn to the paschal candle:

> All's well with wax, for God who made it such
> Is good; nor can man mar it, but his heart
> Can love its God too little, wax too much.

It is only when the Creator is rightly loved, that is, when He is loved for what He is, and when no creature is loved in place of Him, that there cannot be too much of love. For, even love itself, whereby we love well what it is well to love, must not be loved too well, if we want virtue by which we live well to dwell with us.[1] Hence, so it seems to me, the best brief definition of virtue is to say it is the ordering of love. That is why, in the holy Canticle of Canticles, the spouse of Christ, the City of God, sings: 'Order charity in me.'[2]

It was the order of this charity, the ordering of affection and love, that was disturbed when the sons of God loved

1 *Nam et amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus qua vivtur bene.*

2 Cant. 2.4.

God too little and the daughters of men too much, for this means that the City of God was in love with the city of the world! Of course, the 'sons of God' were the sons of men by nature, but by grace they had begun to have another name. Actually, in the same Scripture, which tells us of the sons of God loving the daughters of men, the expressions, 'angels of God,' is also used. This explains why many commentators think that it was angels, not men, who were here involved.

Chapter 23

In Book III of the present work,[1] I mentioned in passing the problem of the possibility of angels, who are spirits, having bodily intercourse with women. We have the explicit text: 'He made spirits His angels,'[2] that is to say, He turned beings who are spirits by nature into angels by giving them the ministry of communicating divine messages. Actually, the word 'angel' is simply Greek for a 'messenger.' The difficulty begins with the rest of the text: 'and Thy ministers a blazing fire.' It is not clear whether this means that God gave them bodies or merely that his ministers should be blazing, as it were, with the spiritual fire of love. However, Scripture records the indubitable fact that angels have appeared to men in bodies that could be not merely seen but felt. And then there is all that talk about those gods in the wilds and the woods commonly called *incubi,* who have been so frequently importunate and successful in seeking to satisfy their lust with women. We have the accounts of a great many victims, or of trustworthy reporters who talked with the victims, of these assaults. There are also the

1 Cf., above, 3.5.
2 Cf. Ps. 103.4.

demons whom the Celts called *deuces*. There are so many tales of their attempted or completed impurities that it would be verging on rudeness to deny them all. However, I would not dare to decide on evidence like this, whether or not certain spirits, embodied in the kind of aerial substance, whose force we can feel when it is fanned against our bodies, are subject to the passion of lust and can awake a responsive passion in women. In any case, I would not dream of believing that it was the holy angels of God who suffered such a fall in the present instance; nor that there is any ground for such a belief in the text of Peter the Apostle: 'For God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but dragged them by infernal ropes to Tartarus and delivered them to be tortured and kept in custody for judgment.'[3] He is surely speaking here of the angels who originally rebelled against God and fell with that devil at their head who disguised himself as a serpent and, out of envy, brought about the fall of the first man. There is more than enough evidence in Holy Scripture to show that men of God are often called angels. Thus it is said of John the Baptist: 'Behold I send my messenger [*angelum meum*] before thee, who shall prepare the way.'[4] So, too, by a special grace reserved for the Prophet Malachy, he was called an angel.[5]

What, however, has impressed some commentators is the fact that we are told that what was born of the union of the so-called angels with women were not men like us but giants. But, surely, even in our day, as I pointed out earlier, men have been born with bodies far bigger than what is normal. Everyone remembers the giantess of Rome who lived, along with her father and mother, only a few years ago at the time

3 2 Pet. 2.4.
4 Mark 1.2.
5 Mal. 2.7.

when the Goths were about to sack the city. Her immense frame towered above everyone else and when a tremendous crowd came from all quarters to see her, what struck people most was the fact that neither of her parents was any taller than other very tall people whom everyone has seen.

There is no difficulty, then, about gaints being born even before the sons of God or the so-called angels or the sons of Seth had carnal commerce with the daughters of men, which is to say, with women living a worldly life, or more plainly, descendants of Cain. For, this is the story as it is told in one of the books of canonical Scripture: 'When men began to multiply on the earth, and had daughters born to them, the angels of God saw that the daughters of men were good, and they took wives for themselves, as many as they wished. Then the Lord said: My spirit shall not remain in man forever, since he is flesh. His lifetime shall be one hundred and twenty years. There were giants on the earth in those days and also after that, because the sons of God had relations with the daughters of men, who bore children to them. These were mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.'[6]

Notice the clear reference to the fact that there were already giants on the earth at the very time when the sons of God fell in love with daughters of men because they were 'good,' in the sense of 'good-looking,' and then married them, for it is Scriptural usage to mean 'good-looking' by 'good.'

But other giants were born after these marriages, as we see from the words: 'There were giants on the earth in those days; and also after that when the sons of God went into the daughters of men.' Thus they existed 'before,' 'in those days,' and 'after that.' The expression *generabant sibi,* 'they brought forth children for themselves,' clearly implies that before the sons of God fell in this way they brought forth

6 Cf. Gen. 6.1-4.

children not for themselves but for God, that is to say, not as slaves to sexual passion but as ministers to the function of propagation, not aiming at a family to satisfy their own pride but with the purpose of peopling the City of God with citizens to whom they would announce as messengers of God that men should put their hope in God, so that, imitating the 'son of resurrection,' the son of Seth who 'hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God,' they could trust that they and all their descendants would share the inheritance of eternal life and become, under the fatherhood of God, brothers of their own children.

There is no doubt about the fact that these 'angels' were men and not, as some people think, creatures different from men. Scripture is unambiguous in what it declares. First it says: 'The angels of God saw that the daughters of men were good, and they took wives for themselves, as many as they wished.' Then at once come the words: 'Then the Lord said: My spirit shall not remain in man forever since he is flesh.' The meaning is this. By the Spirit of God they had been made 'angels' and 'sons' of God, but by letting themselves down from grace to the lower level of nature their name becomes 'men.' They are called 'flesh' in the sense that, when they deserted the Spirit, the Spirit deserted them. In the Septuagint Greek text, both expressions appear: 'angels of God' and 'sons of God,' although in some copies we find only 'sons of God.' In the translation made by Aquila, which is the one preferred by the Jews themselves, the expression used is neither 'angels of God' nor 'sons of God' but 'sons of Gods.' None of these expressions is erroneous. For, the men were sons of one God, because under the fatherhood of God they were brothers of their own fathers; they were 'sons of Gods' because, according to the words of the psalm, 'You

are Gods and all of you sons of the Most High,'[7] they were 'Gods' along with the 'Gods' from whom they were born. However, although it seems that the original Hebrew expression is susceptible of either translation, namely 'sons of God' and 'sons of Gods,' nevertheless there are such good reasons for thinking that the seventy translators were divinely inspired as teachers that whatever change they made, in departing from the text by the authority of the Spirit, can be accepted without hesitation as divinely inspired.

In this connection there is no need to appeal to the fables in those writings which are called *apocrypha*, hidden, because their origin was hidden from the Fathers upon whom we rely for the handing down, in an authentic and discernible tradition, of the authoritative canon of Scripture. There is, of course, some truth to be found in these apocryphal writings, but they contain so much that is false that their canonical authority is nil. Thus, although it is undeniable that some writings left by Henoch in the seventh generation after Adam were divinely inspired, since Jude the Apostle, in a canonical Epistle says so, nevertheless the writings of Henoch were omitted, and not without good reason, from the canon of Scripture which was carefully preserved by the priestly line in the Temple of the Hebrew people. Their very antiquity made them suspect, for no one could tell whether the writings were those of Henoch, since they were not claimed as such by those who could be shown to have been so careful in preserving, generation after generation, the canonical tradition. That is why the writings which ran under the name of Henoch, and contain the fables about giants not having men for their fathers, are not believed to be his by those who are capable of judging.

This also applies to a number of writings under the names of various Prophets and Apostles which are circulated by

7 Ps. 81.6.

heretics. They have been carefully examined and kept apart, under the name Apocrypha, from writings which have canonical authority.

All that we indubitably know, from the authentic Scripture in the Hebrew and Christian traditions, is the fact that, in the period before the flood, there were many giants, all of whom belonged to the earthly city in human society, and that there were sons of God descended from Seth, who abandoned their holiness and sank down into this city of men. There is nothing surprising in the fact that giants could be born from men like that. In any case, they were not all giants, even though there were more giants before the flood than in all subsequent ages. They served a divine purpose in this, that they reveal to anyone who is wise that mere bodily magnitude and might have no more value than bodily beauty. For, it is not by the values which can be shared by good and bad men alike that a holy man is made happy, but only by those spiritual and immortal blessings which are better and more secure in themselves and are reserved for men who are good. It is the truth which the Prophet Baruch had in mind when he wrote: 'There were the giants, those renowned men that were from the beginning, of great stature, expert in war. The Lord chose not them, neither did they find the way of knowledge. Therefore did they perish. And because they had not wisdom, they perished through their folly.'[8]

Chapter 24

Consider the text: 'Their days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'[1] The words cannot be taken as a prophecy

8 Bar. 3.26-28.

1 Gen. 6.3.

that, after the flood, men would not live beyond 120 years, because, as a simple fact, some of these men lived more than 500 years. The meaning is that Noe was then 480 years old or, as Scripture, in its ordinary way of using round numbers, puts it, 500. Now, the flood came when Noe was in the second month of his 600th year. Thus, there were 120 years of life left for those who were to perish in the flood, and this is what God predicted.

We have good reason to think that the flood was sent because there were no longer any people on earth who did not deserve to die in this way as a penalty for their wickedness. Of course, it would make no difference even to good men, once they were dead, to have died in this way, since they have to die someday; yet of those whom Holy Scripture mentions as descendants of Seth, not a single one perished in the flood. The cause of the flood as given in the inspired narrative is as follows: 'And God seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times, God thought and then had second thoughts that He had made man on earth, and He said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts, from the creeping things even to the fowls of the air because I am angry that I made them.'[2]

Chapter 25

God's 'anger' implies no perturbation of the divine mind; it is simply the divine judgment passing sentence on sin. And when God 'thinks and then has second thoughts,' this merely means that changeable realities come into relation with His

2 Cf. Gen. 6.5-7.

immutable reason. For God cannot 'repent,' as human beings repent, of what He has done, since in regard to everything His judgment is as fixed as His foreknowledge is clear. But it is only by the use of such human expressions that Scripture can make its many kinds of readers whom it wants to help to feel, as it were, at home. Only thus can Scripture frighten the proud and arouse the slothful, provoke enquirers and provide food for the convinced; this is possible only when Scripture gets right down to the level of the lowliest readers.[1]

When God announces the death of all animals on the earth and in the air, the intention is to declare the magnitude of the coming disaster. There is no question here of punishing with death irrational animals as though they were guilty of sin.

Chapter 26

Speaking of Noe, our unerring Scriptures tell us that he 'was a just and perfect man in his generation,'[1] meaning that he was perfect as far as citizens of the City of God can be perfect during the pilgrimage of this present life, not, of course, as perfect as they are to be in that immortal life in which they will be as perfect as the angels of God. Now, it was this Noe whom God ordered to make an ark in which, along with his family—his wife, sons and daughters-in-law —and also the animals that, at God's bidding, joined him in the ark, Noe would be saved from the devastation of the deluge.

Undoubtedly, the ark is a symbol of the City of God on its pilgrimage in history, a figure of the Church which was saved by the wood on which there hung the 'Mediator be-

1 . . . *si non se prius inclinaret et quodam modo descenderet ad iacentes.*

1 Gen. 6.9.

tween God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.'[2] Even the very measurements of length, height, and breadth of the ark are meant to point to the reality of the human body into which He came as it was foretold that He would come. It will be recalled that the length of a normal body from head to foot is six times the breadth from one side to the other and ten times the thickness from back to front. Measure a man who is lying on the ground, either prone or supine. He is six times as long from head to foot as he is wide from left to right or right to left, and he is ten times as long as he is high from the ground up. That is why the ark was made 300 cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and thirty in height. As for the door in the side, that, surely, symbolizes the open wound made by the lance in the side of the Crucified—the door by which those who come to Him enter in, in the sense that believers enter the Church by means of the sacraments which issued from that wound. It was ordered that the ark be made out of squared timbers—a symbol of the four-square stability of a holy life, which, like a cube, stands firm however it is turned. So it is with every other detail of the ark's construction. They are all symbols of something in the Church.

But, to pursue this would take me too far from my present purpose; besides, I have already done so in a work against Faustus the Manichaean. This is a work in which I attack Faustus the Manichaean for denying that there are any prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament. Biblical interpretations, of course, can vary in value—and I do not claim that mine is the best—but any interpretation which is to catch the mind of the writer who described the flood

2 1 Tim. 2.5.

must realize the connections of this story with the City of God which, in this wicked world, is ever tossed like the ark in the waters of a deluge. Anyone is free to reject the interpretations I gave in the work against Faustus. I said, for example, that the words, 'with lower, middle chambers, and third stories shall they make it,'[3] can be applied to the Church. The Church is gathered from all nations, and is two-storied because it has room for two kinds of men, the circumcised and the uncircumcised, or the Jews and the Greeks, as the Apostle calls them. But the Church is also three-storied because after the flood the whole world was repeopled with descendants from the three sons of Noe.

Now, anyone is entitled to say something else, so long as what he says is in harmony with the rule of faith. Thus, God wanted the ark to have rooms not only in the lower story but also in the middle story—the 'middle chambers'—and even in the top story—the 'third stories'—so that there should be living space from the bottom to the top. These stories may well be taken to imply the three virtues praised by the Apostle: faith, hope and charity. However, better application would be to the three harvest-increases mentioned in the Gospel, the thirty-fold, sixty-fold and hundred-fold, the meaning being that on the lowest level in the Church we have chaste marriage, on the next level chaste widowhood, and on the highest level virginal purity. Still better interpretations can be expressed, so long as they square with the faith of the City of God. This is true of any other text which I may have occasion to interpret. All explanations need not be the same, but none may be proposed which is incompatible with the Catholic faith.

3 Gen. 6.16.

Chapter 27

For all this latitude of interpretation, no one is free to think that there is no deeper meaning in the written words or that all we should look for is the truth of the facts without regard to any allegorical purpose. On the other hand, no one should think that the whole story is merely a fabric of words full of mystical meanings or, whether fact or fiction, that it has no prophetic relevance to the Church. Certainly, no man in his senses will claim that writings which have been as religiously guarded and as carefully handed down from generation to generation for thousands of years are so devoid of meaning that no one need seek in them anything but the narrative of naked facts. Just take a fact like the number of the animals. Their great number explains why the ark had to be so big. But, how shall we explain, apart from symbolism, that six animals of each 'clean' species had to be brought in for every two that were of an 'unclean' species? As far as the mere factual preservation of the different species goes, there was no need of these unequal numbers. In any case, God who ordered them to be kept in order to preserve their species could have replaced them by other animals as easily as He had originally created them.

On the other hand, there are those who claim that there are no real facts in the story, but merely symbols of other realities. First of all, they say, it is impossible that any flood could be so great as to rise fifteen cubits above the highest mountains, certainly, not above Mt. Olympus, which is said to be so high that no clouds can form above it. At that great height, they say, there could be none of that denser air in which winds and clouds and rain originate. It does not seem to occur to such skeptics that earth, which is far denser than clouds or any other element, can exist up there. Surely,

they do not deny that the top of Olympus is made of earth. But, if the earth can rise that high, why not water? After all, it is these very measurers and weighers of the elements who assure us that water is lighter than earth and is meant by nature to be above it. What rational explanations do the skeptics give for saying that earth, the denser and lower element, has for so many ages invaded the region of the tranquil ether, but that water, which is less dense and, therefore, naturally higher, was forbidden to trespass there even for the briefest period.

Another objection is that the ark was too small to hold so many species of animals, male and female, and with six of each clean species and two of each unclean species. But those who raise the objection seem to forget that there was not just one story 300 cubits long by 50 broad, but three such stories, and hence a total space of 900 by 150 cubits. And if we accept the brilliant hypothesis of Origen that, since Moses, the man of God, was also, as we are told, 'instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,'[1] which included a diligent study of geometry, he may have meant geometrical cubits. Now these, it is said, are six times as long as ours. Hence, anyone can see the enormous capacity of so immense an ark.

And it is folly to continue the argument by denying the possibility of building so big an ark. After all, our skeptics must know that cities of enormous size have been built, and they should not forget that it took a hundred years to build the ark. Surely, if stone can be cemented to stone with nothing but lime until a wall around a city is miles in length, why cannot plank be fitted to plank by rivets, bolts, nails, and pitch to build an ark that was not even curved but rectangular, and that was not launched by men's efforts but was

1 Acts 7.22.

simply lifted on the rising waters by the natural law of specific gravity, and that was to be piloted more by divine providence than human ingenuity and so was safe from all dangers of shipwreck.

A further question asked by the curious concerns those tiny creatures, smaller even than mice and lizards, such as locusts, beetles, flies, and even fleas. Were there not more of these in the ark than the two or six prescribed by God? Those who raise this difficulty must first be reminded that the words, 'that creep on the earth,' imply that there was no need to preserve in the ark animals that live either in the water like fishes, or on the water, as many birds do. Second, the words, 'male and female,' imply that there was no need to have in the ark such animals as are not born in the normal way but pullulate from putrid or inanimate matter. Or, if they were in the ark, they could have been there as they are in our houses and not in any definite number. On the other hand, if the sacred mystery which was there being enacted demanded, down to the last number of non-marine animals, the perfect accord of symbolic figure and historical fact, then God took care of this in His own way and did not leave it to Noe or his family. Notice that it was not left to Noe to capture the animals before putting them in the ark. He merely let them in as they came. They 'shall go with thee,' as we are told. That means: by God's will, not by man's work. So, too, it says: 'of the male sex, and the female'[2]—an express prescription which makes it needless to believe that there were any sexless animals in the ark. In this connection it may be recalled that some animals, like flies, are not born but spring from any kind of decaying matter and only later mate and procreate, and that others, like bees, have no sex at all. Then, there are animals, like mules, that

2 Gen. 6.19.

have sex but no fecundity. It would be surprising if any such were in the ark, since it was sufficient to have their parents there—in the case of the mule, the horse and the donkey. The same would apply to any other animals produced by crossing two different species. However, if the Mystery called for it, we may be sure that even such animals were there, since they are of the male sex, and the female.

Finally, there are some who are worried by the problem of feeding the carnivorous animals in the ark. Must there have been, beyond the prescribed number of animals, some that were needed as the nourishment of other animals? I am inclined to suppose that there was a supply of some other kind of food that could have suited all the animals. After all, everyone knows that lots of carnivorous animals also feed on vegetables and fruit and, especially, on figs and chestnuts. It would not be surprising if so wise and good a man as Noe was had been helped by God to know what each animal needed and so prepared and stored foods, other than meat, that were fit for all. In any case, hungry animals will eat almost anything, and, of course, God, who could easily have made any food pleasant and nourishing, could just as easily have kept the animals alive without any nourishment, had not the feeding been an important part of the symbolical significance of the whole drama.

It is this symbolic prefiguring of the Church which gives meaning to all the multitude of factual details, and this no one will deny who is not incurably obstinate. There is one fulfillment which is so luminously clear as to leave no doubt that even the more difficult details have a meaning if only we could discern it. I allude to the fact that the nations of the world have so filled the Church, and the 'clean' and the 'unclean' have been so woven into the texture of the Church's unity, in which they are to remain until the final separation.

These facts are so established that not even the most obdurate will dare to deny that deeper than the written record is its purpose; or that the facts have a meaning; or that the symbolical words have a basis in fact; or that there is a demonstrable relevance of the symbolism to the Church. On the contrary, such a man is bound to believe that there was a purpose in committing these facts to writing and in handing them down to future generations; that the events really took place; that what took place had a symbolic meaning; that the meaning is a foreshadowing of the Church.

At this point I may close this present Book. The next step will be to trace the history of the two cities—the one living according to man and the other according to God— as that history may be found in events which took place either immediately or long after the deluge.

BOOK SIXTEEN

Chapter 1

AFTER THE FLOOD, do the traces of the holy City continue unbroken, or were they so interrupted by periods of unholiness that not a single worshiper of the true God remained? It is difficult to discover any clear answer to this question in the revelations of Holy Scripture. The fact is that in the canonical books, for the period from Noe (who was saved in the ark from the waste of waters, along with his wife, their three sons, and their wives) to Abraham, there is only one clearly revealed testimony of religious virtue. This one exception is that Noe praised his sons, Sem and Japheth, with a prophetic blessing, when he foresaw in a vision events that were to happen long afterwards. In this connection, it will be recalled that, when his second son—the one younger than the first-born but older than the other—had sinned against his father, he was not cursed in his own person but in that of his son, Noe's grandson, and in these words: 'Cursed be Chanaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.'[1] Now, Chanaan was the son of Cham, who, instead of covering the nakedness of his sleeping father, had revealed it. There is also a prophetic sense, veiled by symbols, in the words that follow, when Noe blessed his oldest and youngest sons: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Sem, be Chanaan his servant. May God enlarge

1 Gen. 9.25.

Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Sem.'[2] The same is true of Noe's planting of the vineyard, his inebriation from wine, his nakedness while asleep, and the rest of what happened and is recorded in this connection.

Chapter 2

What was then veiled has been sufficiently revealed by subsequent events in connection with Noe's posterity. For, no one who has studied the matter with care and understanding can fail to see the fulfillment in Christ. Take Sem, of whom Christ, in His human nature, was a descendant. Sem, in Hebrew, means 'renowned.' Now, what could be more 'renowned' than Christ, the fragrance of whose name is now spread all over the world and who, in the Canticle of Canticles is prophetically compared with poured-out perfume.[1] So, too, Japheth means 'width'; and in Christ's houses, that is to say, in His churches, widely scattered peoples find a home. Again, Cham (meaning 'hot') was Noe's middle son, in between the others yet apart from each of them—neither in the 'first fruits' of the Israelites nor in the 'fulness of the Gentiles.'[2] Thus, he is a symbol of the heretical kind of heat —not the warmth of wisdom but the blaze of bigotry by which the passions of the heretics so often disturb the peace of the faithful. This, however, is all for the good of those who are growing in grace, according to the words of the Apostle: 'For there must be factions, so that those who are approved may be made manifest among you.'[3] It is also

2 Gen. 9.26,27.

1 Cf. Cant. 1.3.
2 Cf. Rom. 11.16,25.
3 1 Cor. 11.19.

written: 'The son who is instructed shall be wise and he shall use a fool as his servant.'[4] For, there are many points of the Catholic faith which, when put on the defensive by the restless zeal of heresy, come to be examined with more thoroughness, grasped with more clarity, and proclaimed with more emphasis. Thus does doubt raised by the Devil end in dogmatic pronouncement.[5]

However, it is reasonable to see in Noe's middle son a symbol, not only of those who are in open revolt against the Church, but of all those who live in sin while claiming to be Christians. Such people dishonor by their morals what they hold to by faith, namely, the passion of Christ which was symbolized by Noe's nakedness. Of such men it was said: 'By their fruits you will know them.'[6] That is why Cham was cursed in his son, as in his fruit, that is to say, in his works; and why the name of his son, Chanaan, can be taken to mean 'their movements,' which is practically the same as 'their works.'

Sem and Japheth stand for circumcised and uncircumcised or, as the Apostle puts it, Jews and Greeks (meaning Gentiles who have been called and given grace). As soon as they were aware of the nakedness of their father—symbol of the passion of our Saviour—they took a cloak and put it over their backs and, entering with their backs turned, they covered the nakedness of their father without seeing what they reverently covered. Note that, in a certain sense, in reverencing what was done for us in the passion of Christ, we turn our backs on the sin of the Jews. In the Scripture account the 'cloak' symbolizes mystery; 'backs,' the memory of the past;

4 A rendering of the Septuagint version of Prov. 10.5.
5 . . . *et ab adversario mota questio discendi existit occasio.* Cf., below, 18.51.
6 Matt. 7.20.

because the Church celebrates the passion of Christ not as something to be looked for in the future but as something already accomplished, seeing that Japheth already dwells in the houses of Sem and the wicked brother is between them.

The wicked brother, however, 'in his son' (in the sense of 'in his works'), is the boy or servant of the good brothers, since good men knowingly make use of bad men to exercise their patience or to increase their wisdom. Take the case of the Apostle, speaking of those who preach Christ without sincerity. He says: 'whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being proclaimed; in this I rejoice, yes and I shall rejoice.'[7] For it is Christ who planted the vineyard of which the Prophet says: 'The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,'[8] and He drinks of its wine. Or, perhaps, we should here understand the cup of which He says: 'Can you drink of the cup of which I am about to drink?'[9] and 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.'[10] And by cup He undoubtedly meant His passion. Or, again, since wine is the fruit of the vineyard, wine rather than the vineyard was symbolized, for it is from the vineyard, that is, of the race of the Israelites, that He took flesh and blood for our sakes in order that He might suffer. 'And he was intoxicated'[11] —that is, He suffered. And 'he was made naked'—in the passion, His weakness was made bare or clear. The Apostle says: 'For though he was crucified through weakness'[12] and also: 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.'[13]

The Scriptures complete the words, 'And he was made

7 Phil. 1.18.
8 Isa. 5.7.
9 Matt. 20.22.
10 Matt. 26.39.
11 Cf. Gen. 9.21.
12 2 Cor. 13.4.
13 1 Cor. 1.25.

bare,' by the phrase 'in his house.' This is a neat way of implying that He was to suffer the cross and His death from his own people and household, from those of his own flesh and blood, that is, from the Jews.

This passion of Christ the reprobate announce only externally by the sound of their voice, for they do not understand what they announce. The good, however, interiorly have a hold on this great mystery and honor in their hearts the weakness and folly of God, which are stronger and wiser than men. This was symbolized when Cham, going out, announced Noe's shame externally while Sem and Japheth went in (that is, what they did they did interiorly) in order to veil, that is, to reverence Noe's nakedness.

We investigate these hidden meanings of divine Scripture as best we can, some finding symbols with more, others with less success. However, what is certain to all men of faith is, first, that these things were not done and recorded without some prefiguring of what was to come and, second, that they are to be referred only to Christ and His Church, which is the City of God, concerning which, from the beginning of the human race, there has been no lack of prophecy which we now see completely fulfilled.

Apart from this blessing of the two sons of Noe and the cursing of the middle one, for the whole time up to Abraham, that is, for more than 1,000 years, there is no mention of any just men who devoutly worshiped God. Not that I believe there were none, but, if they all were to be mentioned, it would take too long and would add up, not to prophetic foresight, but merely to historical accuracy. The purpose of the writer of these Holy Scriptures (or, rather, of the Spirit of God working through him) is to mention those matters which make not merely a record of the past but a prophecy of the future, in so far as this is related to the City of God.

As for the people who are not citizens of this City, whatever is told of them is related merely that the City may gain or be glorified by comparison with its opposite. We need not suppose that there is a meaning in everything that is related, but, when events without a significance are recorded, it is for the sake of those which have some meaning. It is only the blade of the plough that cuts the soil, but to do this the rest of the plough is needed. So, too, only the strings of the cithara and other musical instruments give the notes for the song; to do this there are other parts in the make-up of the instruments which are not plucked by the players but are connected with the strings for the sake of the resonance. So, in prophetic history, some things are related which have no significance, but they serve as context, and in a sense as necessary context, for the facts which are significant.

Chapter 3

We must now take a look at the decendants of the sons of Noe, and weave whatever seems necessary to say of them into the narrative of this work on the historical progress of the two cities of man and of God. The first mention of the descendants begins with the youngest son, whose name was Japheth. We have the names of eight of his sons, and of seven grandsons born of two of his sons, three of one and four of the other. In all, we have fifteen names. Of the sons of Noe's middle son, Cham, four are mentioned; there are five grandsons born of one of these sons, two great-grandsons born of one of the grandsons—in all, eleven. When all these have been mentioned the Scripture goes on to say: 'Chus begot . . . Nemrod who began to to be a giant on the earth. He was a giant hunter against the

Lord God. On this account they have the expresssion, "Like Nemrod a giant hunter against the Lord." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, and Arach and Achad, and Chalanne in the land of Sennaar. Out from that land came forth Assur and built Nineve and the city of Roboth and Chale and Dasem between Nineve and Chale: this is the great city.'[1]

And so, this Chus, the father of the giant Nemrod, is the first-mentioned of the sons of Cham—who was reckoned as having five sons and two grandsons. We may suppose that he begot the giant after his grandsons were born, or, what is more likely, the Scripture speaks of him apart because of his exceptional position, seeing that mention is made of his kingdom which began with the famous city of Babylon and the other cities or regions in that neighborhood.

It is mentioned that Assur went out from that land (that is, the land of the Sennaar) which belonged to the kingdom of Nemrod, and built Nineve and the other cities mentioned with it. All this happened later, but it was mentioned here because of the greatness of the kingdom of the Assyrians after its expansion by Ninus, the son of Belus, the builder of the great city of Nineve. Babylon took its name from Belus, just as Nineve from Ninus. Assur (from whom the Assyrians take their name) was not among the sons of Cham, the middle son of Noe, but among the sons of Sem, the oldest son of Noe. Thus it is clear that those who later gained the kingdom of the giant and from there proceeded to build other cities (like Nineve, built by Ninus) were descendants of Sem.

Next, Scripture returns to another son of Cham, who was called Mesraim. His sons, too, are mentioned, not singly but as seven family groups. Mention is made of a group called the Philistines who issued from the sixth group as though from a sixth son. Thus, there are eight in all.

1 Cf. Gen. 10.8-12.

The Scripture then returns once more to Chanaan, the son in whom Cham was cursed. Eleven of his descendants are named, and the cities are mentioned which represent the limit of their expansion. Thus, reckoning both sons and grandsons, mention is made of thirty-one descendants of Cham.

And now we turn to the sons of Sem, the eldest son of Noe. The narrative of Noe's descendants which began with the youngest son finally reaches Sem. With just which one of the sons of Sem the story begins is not clear—a matter that calls for discussion, since it touches the point which we are pursuing. The Scriptures say: 'And there was born to Sem, the father of all the sons of Heber, the older brother of Japheth.'[2] Translating word for word, the text reads: 'And to Sem Heber was born, even to himself, that is to Sem himself Heber was born, and Sem is the father of all the sons.' Thus he meant Sem to be taken as the patriarch of all those of his family whom he was to mention, whether sons or grandsons or great-grandsons or those born from these. Certainly, Sem did not beget Heber, for Heber was in the fifth generation from him. Sem begot, among others, Arphaxad. Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, who was the father of Sala, who was the father of Heber. The point in mentioning Heber, the great-great-grandson first among the descendants of Sem and putting him even before Sem's sons must be that the tradition is true which derives the word Hebrews from his name, as though they were Heberews. There is another theory, namely, that the name is taken from Abraham, as though they were Abrahews. The truth is that the Heberews were named from Heber and that the letter 'e' was omitted, giving us 'Hebrews.' Their language was used only by the

2 Cf. Gen. 10.21.

people of Israel who, in general, were a symbolic foreshadowing of the City of God, while the actual City, in that period of its pilgrimage on earth, was embodied in their saints.

First, the six sons of Sem are named, then four grandsons are born of one of those sons, and finally another of the sons of Sem begot a grandson, and from this grandson a great-grandson was born, and from him, a great-great-grandson whose name was Heber. This Heber begot two sons, one called Phaleg (which means 'division'). The Scripture explains this name thus: 'for in his time the world was divided.'[3]

It will later appear what this means. Another of the sons of Heber was the father of twelve sons; thus, in all, we get twenty-seven descendants of Sem. Adding together then all the descendants of the three sons of Noe—that is, the fifteen from Japheth, the thirty-one from Cham and the twenty-seven from Sem—we get seventy-three. The Scripture continues with the words: 'These are the descendants of Sem according to their families and their languages, in their countries, by their nations,'[4] and again: 'These are the families of the sons of Noe according to their descent in their nations. From these, the nations branched out over the earth after the flood.'[5]

From this we gather that there were seventy-three or, rather, as we shall see, seventy-two families, not seventy-two individual men. Note how, when the sons of Japheth are mentioned, the concluding words are: 'From these sprang the island-peoples. These are the descendants of Japheth in their countries according to their languages and their families, and by their nations.'[6]

3 Gen. 10.25.
4 Gen. 10.31.
5 Gen. 10.32.
6 Gen. 10.5.

Now, in connection with the sons of Cham, the families are, in a certain sense, even more openly mentioned, as I observed above. 'Mesraim was the father of those who are called the Ludim,'[7] and in the same way of the others there are as many as seven families. After all have been mentioned, the Scripture concludes: 'These are the sons of Cham in their tribes according to their tongues and in their districts and in their families.'[8] The reason why the sons of so many are not mentioned is that at birth they became members of other families, and failed to make families of their own. How else can we explain that, while Japheth had eight sons, only the sons of two of these are mentioned; and that, although Cham had four sons, only the sons of three of these are mentioned; and that, although Sem had six sons, we have mention of the posterity of only two of them? Are we to suppose that the others were without sons? This can hardly be believed. But no other nations, calling for the mention of their names, were started, because the sons who were born were added to the ranks of other nations.

Chapter 4

We are told that all these nations had languages of their own. This leads the writer to recall the time when all men had but one tongue and to relate how it happened that the confusion of tongues arose: 'The whole earth used the same language and the same speech. While men were migrating eastward, they discovered a valley in the land of Sennaar and settled there. They said to one another: Come, let us make bricks and bake them. They used bricks for stone and bitumen for mortar. Then they said: Let us build ourselves

7 Cf. Gen. 10.13.
8 Cf. Gen. 10,20.

a city and a tower with its top in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered all over the earth. The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which men had built. And the Lord said: Truly, they are one people and they all have the same language. This is the beginning of what they will do. Hereafter they will not be restrained from anything which they determine to do. Let us go down, and there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them from that place all over the earth; and they stopped building the city. For this reason it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the speech of all the earth. From there the Lord scattered them all over the earth.'[1]

That city which was called Confusion is Babylon; and the marvel of its construction has been recorded in secular history, too. Babylon, in fact, means confusion. It would seem that its founder was the giant Nemrod, as was noticed above. In mentioning him, the Scripture tells us that Babylon was the head[2] of his kingdom, meaning at the head of all the other cities, the capital where the government of the kingdom had its seat. However, the city never reached the kind of completion which the pride of impious men had dreamed. The actual plan called for an immense height—it was meant to reach the sky. This perhaps refers to one of its towers which was to be higher than all the others, or, perhaps, the word tower may mean all the towers much as 'horse' can mean thousands of horsemen, or *rana* mean a multitude of frogs or *locusta* stand for a plague of locusts, as is the case in the account of the plagues which Moses brought upon the Egyptians.

Where would man's vain presumption have ended if it

1 Gen. 11.1-9.
2 *initium.*

succeeded in rearing a building of such size and height, even to the sky in the face of God—since that would have been higher than any mountain and would have reached beyond the limits of our atmosphere? In any case, no harm could have come to God from any straining after spiritual or physical elevation.

The real way to build a highway to heaven is by humility, for this lifts up the heart toward the Lord, but not against the Lord, as was said of the giant who was 'a hunter against God.'[3] The Greek word *enantíon* is ambiguous, meaning both 'in the face of' and 'in the presence of'; hence, some have unwittingly made the mistake of taking the text to mean not 'against' but 'in the presence of.' We find the same word in the Psalm: 'And let us weep in the presence of the Lord who made us';[4] and it also appears in Job: 'You have broken into fury against God.'[5] It is in this latter sense that we must understand the giant as 'a hunter in the face of God.'[6]

How, then, are we to understand the word 'hunter' except in the sense of one who traps, captures, and kills the animals on the earth? We conclude that he raised a tower with the help of his people against God, and by the 'tower' is meant 'impious pride.' However, though a wicked conception is never brought to perfection, is deserves to be punished.[7] But, notice the kind of punishment. It was because the tongue is the means for expressing a domineering command that pride was punished in such a way that the man who refused to understand and obey the commands of God should not be understood by men when he tried to command them.

3 Cf. Gen. 10.9.
4 Cf. Ps. 94.6.
5 Cf. Job. 15.13.
6 St. Jerome, who knew both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint Greek text, translates Gen. 10.9 by *coram,* 'in the presence of,' not by *contra,* 'in the face of.'
7 . . . *malus punitur* adfectus, *etiam cui non succedit* effectus.

Thus was the plot foiled. Since no one could understand him, they abandoned him and he could associate only with those who understood him. Thus were nations divided by language barriers and scattered over the earth, as it pleased God, who acted in ways that are hidden and incomprehensible to us.

Chapter 5

It is written: 'The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which men had built.'[1] The point here is that the builders were not the 'sons of God,' but belonged to that society, living an exclusively human life, which we call the earthly city. Of course, God does not move in a spatial sense, since He is always everywhere at once; He is said to come down whenever He does something on earth which, being counter to the normal course of nature, is miraculous and, in a certain sense, reveals His presence. In the same way, He does not learn anything at the particular time when He 'sees,' since there can be no time when He does not know; He is said to see and know at a certain time when, at that time, He makes something be seen or become known by men. That city, then, had never been seen before in the way God let it be seen when He showed how thoroughly it displeased Him.

However, another possible interpretation is to suppose that God came down to the city only in the sense that His angels, in whom He dwells, came down. As for what is added, namely, 'And the Lord God said: Behold one race and one tongue for all . . . Come and let us descend to confound their tongue there,' that is to be considered a summary, showing the manner of occurrence of what is described in the words, 'The

1 Gen. 11.5.

Lord came down.' If He had already descended, what is the meaning of the words, 'Come and descending let us confound' (which seems to be said to His angels), save that He came down by means of His angels, seeing He was in the angels who came down? Note that He does not say: 'Come and going down, confound,' but: 'let us confound their tongue there.' This shows that He so works by His ministers that they are real co-operators with God, as the Apostle says: 'For we are God's helpers.'[2]

Chapter 6

Another expression might have been understood as spoken to the angels—when, at man's creation, God said: 'Let us make man,'[1] and not: 'Let me make.' However, since this is followed by the phrase, 'to our image,' and since we cannot suppose that man was made to the image of the angels, or that the image of the angels is the same as the image of God, the proper interpretation of the plural 'us' is that it refers to the Trinity. For, the Trinity is one God even when the Trinity says: 'Let us make.' Note, too, that it says: 'And God made man to the image of God,' not 'Gods made' or 'to their image.'

It is conceivable that here, too, there may have been an allusion to the Trinity, if we suppose that the Father said to the Son and Holy Spirit: 'Come, let us descend and confound their tongue.'[2] The supposition is sound if there is anything to rule out the possibility that angels were meant. And, surely, it is more proper for the angels to come to God

2 1 Cor. 3.9.

1 Gen. 1.26,27.
2 Cf. Gen. 11.7.

unbidden, moved by grace, that is, by the thoughts which make them devoutly submissive to Unchanging Truth, as to the eternal law which rules in their heavenly court. The angels are not their own criterion of truth, but, depending on Creative Truth, they move unbidden toward It as toward a fountain of life, from which they must imbibe what they do not have of themselves. And their motion is without change, since they keep coming, never to depart.

Of course, God does not speak to the angels in the way we speak to one another or to God or to His angels or in the way the angels speak to us or that God speaks to us through the angels. God's way of speaking to the angels is inexpressible, but the fact of His speaking is indicated to us in our own way. When God speaks mysteriously before He acts, His speech is the unchanging cause of what He does. It has no noise of passing sound, and its force that works in time is eternally at rest. By such speech does He speak to the angels, but to us who are far from Him He speaks in another manner. When, however, we catch something of His words with our interior ears, we become like the angels. Thus, it is no part of the purpose of this work for me to dwell at length on God's ways of speaking. All I need say is that Unchanging Truth either speaks to the minds of His rational creatures directly in a way that is indescribable, or He speaks by means of some changing creature, and, when He does so, He speaks to our spirit in spiritual images or to our senses by audible words.

As to the words, 'Hereafter they will not be restrained from anything which they determine to do,'[3] they were not said by way of affirmation, but by way of interrogation, as is common when a threat is made, as for example, in the poet's line: 'They will not take arms and pursue from the

3 Cf. Gen. 11.6.

whole city?'[4] We must read the text as though it meant: 'Will not all that they have tried to do come to nothing?' Even so, it does not bring out the fact that there is a threat. We put this in question form for the sake of those who may not easily catch the meaning, since one cannot express in writing the intonation of a person who is speaking.

Thus from the three men, the sons of Noe, seventy-three or, rather, as I shall explain, seventy-two nations, each with its own langage, had their origin, and as they increased they filled not only the mainland but the islands of the sea. However, the number of nations exceeded the number of languages. Thus, in Africa we know there are many barbarous peoples with a single tongue, and there is no difficulty in supposing that, as the population increased, men could set sail to inhabit the islands.

Chapter 7

A question arises how wild animals, propagated by ordinary mating, like wolves and the rest, can be found on the islands far at sea, unless those which were destroyed by the flood were replaced by others descended from the animals, male and female, which were saved in the ark. (There is no problem in regard to domestic animals or to those which, like frogs, spring directly from the soil.) One hypothesis is that they swam to the islands, but only to those that were near. But there are some islands so far from the continental mainland that it seems impossible that any of the animals could have swum there. Of course, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that men captured the animals and took them with them and bred them for the sake of hunting. Another

4 *Aeneid* 4.592.

possibility is that, by the command or permission of God and with the help of angels, the animals could have been transferred to the islands. Another hypothesis would be that they sprang up from the earth, as they sprang up in the beginning when God said: 'Let the earth produce a living soul.'[1] In this case, if the earth produced the many animals in islands which could not be reached, it becomes clearer than ever that the purpose of all the animals in the ark was less for the sake of replenishing the stock of animals than for the sake of prefiguring the mystery of the Church which was to be composed of so many peoples.

Chapter 8

A further question arises whether it was from one of the sons of Noe or from Adam himself that human monsters have sprung. At any rate, the history of many peoples records that there have been, for example, beings with one eye in the middle of their forehead, and others with feet growing backwards; the Hermaphrodites with the left side of their chest like a woman's and the right side like a man's and who exercise in turn the male and female functions in begetting and bearing offsprings; others, who have no mouths, breathe only through their ears and live on air; others, no more than a few feet high, are called Pygmies, from the Greek word *pygmé* meaning an arm's length; others, whose women conceive when they are five and die before they are eight years old. They also speak of a people who have but one leg with two feet and who can run with remarkable speed without bending a knee. They are called Sciopodes because they lie on their backs in the summer and they keep the sun

1 Cf. Gen. 1.24.

off with their feet. There are others who are neckless and with eyes in their shoulders; and so for the other kinds of men or near-men who are depicted in the mosaic to be seen in the square near the seafront at Carthage, all of which are taken from books dealing with the history of curiosities. I do not know whether I should mention the Cynocephalae, whose dog-like heads and barking voices prove they are more like animals than men. There is no need to believe that species like these are human, even though they are called men. What is true for a Christian beyond the shadow of a doubt is that every real man, that is, every mortal animal that is rational, however unusual to us may be the shape of his body, or the color of his skin, or the way he walks, or the sound of his voice, and whatever the strength, portion or quality of his natural endowments, is descended from the single first-created man.

What is clear, however, is that nature produces a normal type for the most part, and a thing is wonderful only because it is rare. If whole peoples have been monsters, we must explain the phenomenon as we explain the individual monsters who are born among us. God is the Creator of all; He knows best where and when and what is, or was, best for Him to create, since He deliberately fashioned the beauty of the whole out of both the similarity and dissimilarity of its parts.

The trouble with a person who does not see the whole is that he is offended by the ugliness of a part because he does not know its context or relation to the whole.

I know men who were born with more than five fingers or toes, which is one of the slightest variations from the normal, but it would be a shame for any one to be so silly as to suppose that, because he did not know why God did this, the Creator could make a mistake in regard to the number of

fingers on a man's hand. Even in cases of greater variations, God knows what He is doing and no one may rightly blame His work. Near Hippo Zaritus there is a man with feet shaped like a crescent and with only two toes on each; the same is true of his hands. If some whole race should be born like that, they would add a chapter to the history of rare curiosities. Should that be a reason, then, for saying that the race was not derived from the first created human being?

There are those who are half-men, half-women, the so-called Hermaphrodites. They are born very rarely, but there is hardly ever a period but some creature is born so like both a man and a woman that no one is sure from which sex the name should be taken, even though it is usual to call the person a man on the ground that the male is the stronger sex. Certainly, no one ever refers to them as though they were women.

Not many years ago, within living memory, a person was born in the East who had two heads, two chests, four hands, as though he were two persons, but one stomach, and two feet, as though he were one. And he lived long enough and the case was so well known that many people went to see the wonder.

It would be impossible to list all the human offspring who have been very different from the parents from whom they were certainly born. Still, all these monsters undeniably owe their origin to Adam. The same is true of whole nations. However abnormal they are in their variation from the bodily shape that all or nearly all men have, if they still fall within the definition of men as being rational and mortal animals, we have to admit that they are of the stock of the first father of all men—always supposing, of course, the truth of what is told about peoples who are so different among themselves and so different from us. For, if we did not know that apes,

monkeys and baboons are not humans, but animals, historians, eager to show off the curiosity of their knowledge, might falsely and with impunity describe them as human. Let us suppose, however, that the monsters that have been reported are human. Why could God not will so to create certain whole peoples that, when monsters are born from human parents, we should not imagine that His wisdom in making human nature had failed Him, as though His were the art of an unskilled craftsman.

It need not seem inconceivable to us, then, that, just as there are individual monsters in every nation, so there might be whole nations of monsters in the totality of mankind. However, to bring this discussion to a somewhat hesitating and cautious conclusion, I shall only say: Either the accounts of the whole nations of monsters are valueless; or, if there are such monsters, they are not human; or, if they are human, then thay have sprung from Adam.

Chapter 9

As to the nonsense about there being *antipodae,* that is to say, men living on the far side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets for us, men who have their feet facing ours when they walk—that is utterly incredible. No one pretends to have any factual information, but a hypothesis is reached by the argument that, since the earth is suspended between the celestial hemispheres and since the universe must have a similar lowest and central point, therefore the other portion of the earth which is below us cannot be without human inhabitants.

One flaw in the argument is that, even if the universe could be proved by reasoning to be shaped like a round

globe—or at least believed to be so—it does not follow that the other hemisphere of the earth must appear above the surface of the ocean; or if it does, there is no immediate necessity why it should be inhabited by men. First of all, our Scriptures never deceive us, since we can test the truth of what they have told us by the fulfillment of predictions; second, it is utterly absurd to say that any men from this side of the world could sail across the immense tract of the ocean, reach the far side, and then people it with men sprung from the single father of all mankind.

Let us be content, then, to limit our search for the citizens of the pilgrim City of God on earth to those races of men which, as we have seen, were made up of the seventy-two nations, each with its own language. The City pursued this pilgrimage as far as the flood and the ark, and its progress among the sons of Noe is revealed in the blessings they were granted. Trying to find this City, if we can, we turn especially to the eldest of those sons, to Sem, seeing that the blessing given to Japheth was that he was to dwell in the houses of his brother.

Chapter 10

We must keep before our eyes, then, the succession of generations beginning with Sem if we are to follow the fortune of the City of God subsequent to the flood, as we have seen it before the flood in the series of generations beginning with Seth. That is why Holy Scripture, once it has revealed the earthly city of Babylon (that is to say, of disorder) returns to the patriarch Sem and, after a short summary, follows the generations from Sem to Abraham, indicating the year in which each heir was born and the number of years his father continued to live.

In this connection, something to which I have already alluded[1] can be certainly recognized, namely, the explanation of the expression used in connection with the sons of Heber: 'The name of the one was Phaleg, because in his days the earth was divided.'[2] For, what else are we to understand by this division of the earth if not the division effected by the diversity of tongues? The other sons of Sem are passed over as irrelevant in this connection and only those are linked to Phaleg in the series of generations who were in the direct line of succession leading to Abraham. In much the same way, before the flood, only those were mentioned who were in the direct line of succession that stretched from the son of Adam called Seth to Noe. That is why the new genealogy is introduced with the words: 'These are the generations from Sem. Sem was a son a hundred years old when he became the father of Arphaxad in the second year after the flood. And after becoming the father of Arphaxad, Sem lived 500 years, begetting sons and daughters, and then he died.'[3] And so with the others, Scripture mentions the age at which each one begot the son who was in the direct line to Abraham, and then how long each continued to live, adding the note that he begot other sons and daughters. The point of this is that it helps us to understand how the population could increase so greatly and saves us from childishly wondering how from the few descendants of Sem who are mentioned such large areas of whole kingdoms could be populated—in particular, the Assyrian Empire, whose ruler, the famous Ninus, conquered the Eastern peoples far and wide and reigned with immense success over a realm so broad and

1 Cf., above, 16.3.
2 Gen. 10.25.
3 Cf. Gen. 11.10,11.

strong that, when he left it to his heirs, it continued for a long time to come.

Not to make our narrative too long, we shall neglect the numbers of years each lived and mention only the ages at which each begot the heir who continued the line, so that thus we may calculate the number of years from the flood to Abraham. Other matters we may touch on briefly and in passing if some special pertinence requires it.

So, then, in the second year after the flood Sem begot Arphaxad; and Arphaxad at the age of 135 begot Cainan, who was 130 when Sale was born; and Sale was the same age when he begot Heber. Heber was 134 when Phaleg was born, and its was in Phaleg's days that the earth was divided. Phaleg himself was 130 years old when he became the father of Reu, who was 130 when he begot Sarug, who was 130 when Nachor was born; and Nachor was seventy-nine when Thare was born; Thare was seventy when he begot Abram, whose name was later changed by God to Abraham.

Thus, in all, from the flood to Abraham, we have 1,072 years, according to the Latin translation of the Septuagint. It is said that in the Hebrew text, however, the number of years given is far smaller—which is very difficult, if not impossible, to explain.

When we seek for the traces of the City of God among the seventy-two nations, we cannot say that, during the time when there continued to be one tongue or way of speaking, the human race had departed so far from the worship of the true God that true religion was confined solely to those who were in the direct succession from Sem, through Arphaxad, to Abraham. What is certain is that the society of the wicked made an appearance in that overwhelming effort to reach heaven by the tower which is the very symbol of

godless pride. It may have made its first appearance then; or it may have had a latent existence earlier; or the two cities may have had a continuous history from the time of Noe's sons, the one City in the sons who were blessed and their posterity, the other in the son who was cursed and his posterity, among whom was born the giant, the hunter against God. However, a decisive judgment in this matter is difficult. What seems highly credible to me is that among the sons even of the two who were blessed and even before men began to build Babylon there were, probably, those who despised God and that among the descendants of Cham there were some who worshiped God. We ought to believe that at no time was the world without both kinds of men. At any rate, on both occasions when we meet the words of the Psalmist, 'All men have failed and become useless; there is no one who does good, not one,'[4] we also read: 'Shall not all they know that work iniquity, who devour my people as they eat bread.' This proves that at that time there was a people of God. Yet, the previous words, 'There is no one who does good, not one,' are said of the sons of men, not of the sons of God. Note the preceding words: 'God looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, or did seek God,'[5] and then the words that follow prove that all the sons of man, that is, all who belong to the city that lives according to men and not according to God are reprobate.

Chapter 11

Even at the period when there was but one language for all mankind, there were still some men infected with sin, as

4 Cf. Ps. 13.3,4; 52.5.
5 Ps. 52.3.

is shown by the fact that, before the flood, there was a common tongue, yet all men except that family of Noe deserved to be destroyed by the flood. On the other hand, when confusion of tongues and divisions among men punished them for their sin of impious pride, and when the city of the sinners was named Babylon (which means confusion), there was still the family of Heber, and in that family the originally universal language remained. That is why, as I mentioned above,[1] in the enumeration of the sons of Sem, from each of whom a distinct nation arose, at the top of the list is Heber, although he was not a son but a great-great-grandson in the fifth generation. And the reason why the original and, as is rightly believed, common language of mankind was called Hebrew is that this language was continued in the family of Heber after all other peoples were divided by a variety of tongues. For that language, too, had to be given its own special name to distinguish it from all the others which had their individual names. Earlier, of course, when a single language was used by all mankind, it had no other name than the language of mankind or human speech.

If anyone should raise the objection that the original common tongue should be named after Heber's son Phaleg, since it was in his days that the earth (meaning the inhabitants of the earth) was divided by language barriers, it must be recalled that the very reason why Heber gave his son the name of Phaleg (which is Hebrew for 'division') is that Phaleg was born at the very time when the earth was divided by languages and that that is the meaning of the text: 'In his days the earth was divided.'[2] Certainly, unless Heber was still living when the multiplicity of languages arose, the original tongue which managed to survive in his family would

1 Cf., above 16.3.
2 Gen. 10.25.

not have been named after him. And the very reason for believing that this was the original universal language is that the multiplicity and mutability of speech came as a penalty, and, certainly, the people of God must have escaped the punishment.

Nor was it without reason that Abraham, who used this language, was unable to transmit it to any of his posterity except to the heirs of Jacob, who constituted the people of God in the very special sense of being privileged to receive God's convenants and to be the ancestors of Christ. And no more than Abraham did Heber himself succeed in transmitting this language to all his descendants, but only to the direct line in which Abraham was to be born.

It is true, then, that we have no direct statement to the effect that, when Babylon was being built by wicked men, there was a special group of pious men; yet, if we are left in the dark in this matter, the purpose is not to stop our search but to sharpen our vision.[3] Let us, then, look more closely. First we read that from the beginning there was a single common language for everyone; then we notice Heber heads the list of all of Sem's sons, although Heber was born in the fifth generation, and that Hebrew is the name of the language which has the prestige of being used not only in the everyday use of the Patriarchs and Prophets but in the writing of Holy Scripture.

Notice that, when it is asked where the original universal language could have been continued at the time of the confusion of tongues, one thing it quite certain, namely, that the penalty involved in the change of language did not fall on those who continued to speak the original language. Therefore, the answer to the question is that it was continued in

3 . . . *non ad hoc valuit haec obscuritas, ut quaerentis fraudaretur, sed potius ut exerceretur intentio.*

the family of the man from whom the language got the name Hebrew, and that it is a clear sign of the holiness of that family that it was not punished in the way all other nations were punished when they suffered a change of language.

Still another question may be asked. If Heber and his son Phaleg continued to speak the same language, how can each of them be said to have founded a separate nation, especially since the Hebrew nation has been one nation from the time it started in Heber and was continued through Abraham and beyond until it became the great people of Israel? But, if Heber and Phaleg did not found their own nations, how can it be said that all who are mentioned as the sons of the three sons of Noe founded separate nations? For, it is very probable that even the giant Nemrod founded his own nation, and that he is mentioned in a special place apart only because of the remarkable size of his body and the extent of his rule, so that seventy-two still remains the number of the nations and languages. It is true that Phaleg is mentioned, not, however, because he founded a separate nation—since by race and tongue he was a Hebrew—but because of the special time of his birth, namely, when the 'earth was divided.'

Nor, of course, is there anything surprising in the fact that Nemrod lived long enough to see the founding of Babylon, the confusion of tongues, and the consequent division among peoples. There is no difficulty about Nemrod and Heber being contemporaries, even though the former was in the fourth and the latter in the sixth generation after Noe. This can happen where generations are few or many according as lifespans are longer or shorter or births are later or earlier. This much is clear, that, when the 'earth was divided,' not only were all the other sons of the sons of Noe, who are mentioned as fathers of their nations, already born, but they were old

enough to have had descendants numerous enough to be called a clan. Thus, we have no reason whatever to think that the order in which names are mentioned corresponds to the order of births. Certainly, the twelve sons of Jectan, son of Heber and brother of Phale, could not have already expanded into a clan if Jectan was born after his brother Phaleg, whose name, however, is mentioned before that of Jectan—for it was at the time of Phaleg's birth that the 'earth was divided.' We have to suppose that Phale, in spite of being mentioned earlier, was born long after his brother Jectan, since the twelve sons of Jectan already had such large families that they could be separated by language barriers. There is no more difficulty in the younger son's name being mentioned earlier than there is in the case of Noe's three sons, where the descendants of the youngest, Japheth, are first mentioned, then those of the second son, Cham, and, in the last place, those of the first and oldest, Sem.

Of the names of the nations, some, even today, still retain a resemblance to the names of the founders, as the name for Assyrians is from Assur and that of the Hebrews from Heber, but others have suffered so much change with the passing of time that not even the most learned historians or antiquarians have been able to trace more than a very few of the founders in the present names of the nations. Thus, the Egyptians are said to derive from the son of Cham, who was called Mesraim, but there is no echo of the fact in the name. So, too, with the Ethiopians, who are said to be descendants of Cham's son, who was called Chus. All in all, more names have changed than have remained.

Chapter 12

Let us now turn to a new period in the history of the City of God. It began with the Patriarch Abraham. From now on we have fuller evidence of this City, and those divine promises stand out more clearly which we now see were fulfilled in Christ.

Abraham was born in the land of the Chaldaeans, which was then a part of the Assyrian Empire. This we learn from what we read in Holy Scripture.[1] It was a time when the Chaldaeans were as deeply sunk in unholy superstitions as were the rest of the nations. The family of Thare, father of Abraham, was unique in worshiping the one true God and, as far as we know, equally so in preserving the Hebrew language. Nevertheless, according to the account of Josue,[2] son of Nun, even Thare worshiped strange gods in Mesopotamia, just as those who were even more manifestly the people of God were to do in Egypt. As for the Hebrew language, all the other descendants of Heber lapsed, little by little, into the use of other tongues and into the ways of other peoples. Thus, as the single family of Noe survived the deluge of waters and thus rescued the human race, so the single family of Thare survived the deluge of varied superstitions that flooded the whole world and thus preserved the seed of the City of God. Notice another parallel: after Scripture lists the generations down to Noe, indicates the number of years involved, and exposes the reason for the flood, we find, just before God begins to speak to Noe about building the ark, these words: 'These are the generations of Noe';[3] so here, after listing the generations beginning with the son of Noe

1 Cf. Gen. 11.28.
2 Jos. 24.2.
3 Cf. Gen. 6.9.

who was called Sem and continuing down to Abraham, a new epoch is indicated in the words: 'These are the generations of Thare: Thare begot Abram, Nachor and Aran. And Aran begot Lot. Aran died before Thare his father in the land of his nativity in Ur of the Chaldees. Abram and Nachor married wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai and Nachor's wife was Melcha, the daughter of Aran.'[4] This Aran was the father of Melcha and also of a Jescha who is supposed to be the same woman as Sarai the wife of Abraham.

Chapter 13

Scripture tells how Thare and his family left the land of the Chaldaeans and, coming to Mesopotamia, dwelt in Haran. No mention, however, is made of one of his sons, whose name was Nachor; hence, it might seem that Thare did not take him. The text reads: 'Thare took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Aran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and led them from Ur of the Chaldees toward the land of Chanaan; but when they reached Haran, they settled there.'[1] There is no mention here of Nachor and his wife Melcha. Yet, later, in the account of Abraham sending a servant to get a wife for his son Isaac, we read: 'The servant then took ten of his master's camels and a variety of his master's valuables. He set out and journeyed to the city where Nachor lived in Aram Naharaim.'[2] From this and other texts of sacred history we see that Nachor, the brother of Abraham, also left the land of the Chaldaeans and settled in Mesopotamia, where Abraham

4 Gen. 11.27-29.

1 Gen. 11.31.
2 Gen. 24.10.

had lived with his father. Why, then, did Scripture omit to mention Nachor when Thare and his family left the Chaldaean people for a home in Mesopotamia? For, not only was his son Abraham mentioned as accompanying him, but even Sarai his daughter-in-law, and Lot his grandson. The only explanation I can think of is that Nachor very likely lapsed from the faith of his father and brothers into the superstition of the Chaldaeans and only later, by reason of their persecution or of his own repentance, decided to emigrate.

In support of this, there is a passage in the Book of Judith. When the enemy of the Israelites, Holofernes, asked what kind of people they were and whether war should be declared against them, Achior, the leader of the Ammanites, made this reply: 'If thou vouchsafe, my lord, to hear, I will tell the truth in thy sight concerning this people, that dwelleth in the mountains, and there shall not a false word come out of my mouth. This people is of the offspring of the Chaldeans. They dwelt first in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, who were in the land of the Chaldeans. Wherefore forsaking the ceremonies of their fathers, which consisted in the worship of many gods, they worshiped one God of heaven who also commanded them to depart from thence, and to dwell in Chanaan,'[3] and the rest of what Achior the Ammanite said. It is obvious from this that the family of Thare suffered persecution at the hands of the Chaldaeans for a true religion in which they worshiped the one true God.

Chapter 14

Thare is said to have lived 205 years in Mesopotamia, and it is only with his death that we begin to get the Scriptural

3 Judith 5.5-9.

indications of the promises made by God to Abraham. The text concerning Thare's death reads: 'The days of Thare were two hundred and five years; and he died in Haran.'[1] This, however, should be taken to mean that Thare lived all his days in Haran, but that he spent the last of his 205 years there. Otherwise, we should not know how many years he lived, since there is no mention of his age at the time when he came in Haran, and it would be absurd to think that there was this one exception to the rule of making a careful record of the number of years each person in the series of generations lived. There are, indeed, cases in Scripture where mention of the years is omitted, but that is not so in this series where there is an unbroken reckoning of time based on the ages of dying parents and of succeeding heirs. This sequence which goes from Adam to Noe and then to Abraham mentions no name without adding the number of years the person lived.

Chapter 15

After mentioning the death of Thare, the Scripture continues with these words: 'And the Lord said to Abram: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred and out of thy father's house,'[1] and the rest. However, we need not suppose that the sequence of the narrative corresponds to the chronology of the events. Else, we shall be faced with an insoluble problem. For following on these words which were spoken by God to Abraham, Scripture relates: 'So Abram went out as the Lord had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he went

1 Gen. 11.32.

1 Gen. 12.1.

forth from Haran.'[2] Now, how can this be true if he left Haran after the death of his father? For, as indicated above, Thare was seventy years old when Abraham was born. Add seventy to seventy-five (Abraham's age when leaving Haran) and you get 145. That means that Thare was 145 when Abraham left that city of Mesopotamia, for Abraham was in his seventy-five year and, therefore, his father, who was in his seventieth year when Abraham was born, was now, as we said, 145. Now, Thare lived to be 205. Therefore, Abraham could not have departed after his father's death. What we conclude is that the date of the departure from that place was the year when his father was 145, since Abraham himself was seventy-five and Thare seventy when Abraham was born.

This we must suppose is a case, not unusual in Scripture, of returning to a date already covered by the narrative. It was so in regard to the descendants of the sons of Noe. First we are told that each kindred spoke its own tongue.[3] Later, as though the narrative were chronological, it is said: 'And the earth was of one tongue and of the same speech.'[4] Now, how can it say they were 'according to their kindreds and tongues,' when there was one tongue for all, except that the narrative reverts to notice something that was not mentioned in its proper place?

So, here, first it says: 'And the days of Thare were two hundred and five years; and he died in Haran.'[6] Then, reverting to something which had been omitted in order to finish the account of Thare which had been begun, it says: 'And the Lord said to Abram. Go forth out of thy country,'[6] and the rest. After these words of God, it is added: 'Abram

2 Gen. 12.4.
3 Cf. Gen. 10.31.
4 Gen. 11.1.
5 Gen. 11.32.
6 Gen. 12.1.

went away as the Lord had commanded him, and Lot went with him: Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.'[7]

Therefore, this happened when his father was in the 145th year of his age, since it was the seventy-fifth of his own. There is another solution to the same problem, namely, to suppose that Abraham's seventy-five years, at the time when he left Haran, are reckoned, not from his birth, but from his escape from the fire of the Chaldaeans, as though this escape were his real birth.

There is a different account in the sermon of blessed Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles: 'The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran and said to him: Go forth from thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land that I shall show thee.'[8] According to the words of Stephen, God spoke to Abraham not after the death of his father (who, of course, died in Haran where he lived with his son), but before he began to live in Haran, although in Mesopotamia. He had, therefore, already left Chaldaea. It is true that Stephen says: 'Then Abraham went forth from the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran,'[9] adding also: 'From there, after the death of his father, God removed him into this land where you now dwell.' Blessed Stephen does not say: 'He left Haran after his father's death,' but: 'After the death of his father, God removed him into this land.' Our interpretation, therefore, must be that God spoke to Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, but not yet in Haran, and that he came to live in Haran with his father, keeping to himself God's command and then left Haran when he was seventy-

7 Gen. 12.4.
8 Acts 7.2,3.
9 Acts 7.4.

five and his father 145. Stephen says that is was the settlement in the land of Chanaan, not the leaving Haran, which occurred after the death of Abraham's father, because the father was already dead when Abraham bought the land and began to be a landowner in his own name. It is true that it was when he had already left Chaldaea and was settled in Mesopotamia that he heard God's words: 'Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred and out of thy father's house'; the meaning is not that he was to go in body, for he had already done this, but that he should detach his heart from the place. For, so long as he was bound by any hope and yearning to return, he had not left with his whole heart. It was this hope and yearning that needed to be pruned away by God's command and aid and by his own obedience. It seems to me not at all unlikely that Abraham fulfilled the bidding of the Lord, and left Haran along with Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, at the same time that Nachor followed his father.

Chapter 16

I must now turn to consider the promises which God made to Abraham. For, it is in these promises that the utterances of our God, who is the true God, begin to have a clearer reference to the chosen people whom the Prophets, by His inspiration, had foretold.[1] Of these, the first reads as follows: 'The Lord said to Abram: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come in to the land which I shall show thee; I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed. I will bless them that bless thee, and

1 . . . *oracula . . . de populo piorum, quem prophetica praenuntiavit auctoritas.*

curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed.'[2] Notice that two promises were made to Abraham: the first, that his posterity was to possess the land of Chanaan, as is clear from the words: 'Come into the land which I shall show thee; I will make of thee a great nation'; the second, far more important, concerns a spiritual and not merely a carnal posterity, one which made him the father not merely of the people of Israel but of all nations who follow in the footsteps of his faith. This begins with the words: 'And in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed.'

This promise was made, according to Eusebius, in the year when Abraham was seventy-five. The assumption is that, as soon as the promise was given, Abraham departed from Haran, and the argument for this is that Scripture must not be contradicted when it declares: 'Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.' However, if the promise was made in that year, it is no less true that, at that time, Abraham was dwelling with his father in Haran. For, certainly, he could not depart from a place unless he had been living there. The question now arises: Does this, then, contradict what blessed Stephen tells us: 'The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran'?

The only solution is to suppose that all happened in one and the same year: first, God's promise, before Abraham came to dwell in Haran; then, the dwelling there; finally, the departure thence. In favor of this is the fact that Eusebius, in his Chronicles, shows by a calculation, beginning with this year of the promise, that the exodus from Egypt at the time the Law was given took place 430 years after the prom-

2 Gen. 12.1-3.

ise, and, still more, the fact that this is what the Apostle Paul says.[3]

Chapter 17

About this time, there were three famous pagan empires, the Achaian,[1] the Egyptian and the Assyrian, in which the city of the world, the society of men living with purely human purposes under the domination of the traitor-angels, played an important part. Of those empires, the Assyrian was by far the most powerful and the most prominent. In fact, the well-known ruler Ninus, son of Belus, had subdued the whole of Asia except India; and by Asia I mean, not just what is now the Roman province of Asia, but the whole continent of Asia which is sometimes reckoned as a half or, more commonly, as a third of the whole world which consists of Asia, Europe and Africa.

These three continents are not equal in size. Continental Asia stretches far to the south, to the east and to the north; Europe, to the north and west; Africa, to the west and south. Thus, Europe and Africa together take up one half of the world and Asia the other. Africa is divided from Europe by the great oceanic gulf whose waters bathe both shores and which forms our Great Sea.[2] Hence, if the great circle of land is divided into East and West, Asia occupies the one half while Europe and Africa the other.

Hence, the reason why the empire of the Achaians one of the great three, was not subject to Assyria, was because

3 Gal. 3.17.

1 The Sicyonians, as St. Augustine calls them, lived in Achaia. Cf. below, 18.2.

2 The Mediterranean.

Achaia was in Europe; but it is not obvious why Egypt did not fall under the Assyrians, who are reported to have ruled over the whole of Asia except India.

It was in Assyria, then, that the domination of the godless city was at its height. The capital was Babylon—the best of all names for the city of the earth-born, since Babylon means 'confusion.' It was there that Ninus ruled after the death of his father, Belus, whose reign lasted sixty-five years. When the father died, his son, Ninus, succeeded to the empire and reigned fifty-two years in the forty-third of which Abraham was born. This was about 1,200 years before the founding of Rome—which, if I may say so, was to be a second Babylon in the West.

Chapter 18

So, then, in his seventy-fifth year, when his father was 145, Abraham left Haran and, along with Lot, the son of his brother, and Sarai, his wife, set out for the land of Chanaan and came to Sichem. Here it was that he received a second divine communication, in regard to which Scripture says: 'The Lord appeared to Abram, and said: To your descendants I will give this land.'[1] Here there is no mention of the posterity in which he was made the father of all nations, but only of that progeny whereby he became the father of the people of Israel, for it was by these descendants that the land is owned.

Chapter 19

As soon as Abraham had built an altar in Sichem and called upon God, he set out from there and lived in the desert until

1 Gen. 12.7.

a famine forced him to continue as far as Egypt. He said that his wife was his sister—which was not a lie, but a fact, considering how near a relative she was. It was the same in the case of Lot. Being just as near, namely, the son of Abraham's brother, Lot was called Abraham's brother. There was no denial, just the reticence of a man taking precautions against human snares and trusting to God to protect the purity of his wife—trusting, not tempting God, as would have been the case had he not taken every precaution he could to ward off the danger. (On this matter I have said all that needs be said in a reply to the insinuations of Faustus the Manichaean.) In any event, it turned out as Abraham had trusted in the Lord it would. For Pharao, the king of Egypt, who had taken her as a wife, found himself sorely plagued, and restored her to her husband. And there is no reason whatever to believe that she was sullied by any relations with Pharao, since it is far more likely that this was impossible by reason of Pharao's grievous afflictions.

Chapter 20

After Abraham returned from Egypt to the place from which he had come, his nephew Lot, without any breach of affection, left him to go into the land of Sodom. The fact is that both had grown rich and, when they began to have many herdsmen who squabbled among themselves, fierce family quarrels were avoided by this separation. And, human nature being what it is, those quarrels could easily have led to some misunderstanding even between Abraham and Lot. Hence, to ward off any such trouble, Abraham said to Lot: 'Let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are kinsmen. Does not the whole land lie before you? Withdraw

from me. If you go to the left, I will go to the right; or if you take the right, then I will go to the left.'[1]

Possibly it is from this that there has arisen among men seeking a peaceful partition of property the custom of letting the older make the division and the younger take his pick of the portions.

Chapter 21

It was when Abraham and Lot, for the good of their families and without a shadow of hate, had separated and were living at a distance from each other, Abraham in the land of Chanaan and Lot in Sodom, that the Lord spoke to Abraham in a third communication: 'Raise your eyes, and from where you are now look to the north and the south and the east and the west. All the land which you see I will give to you and your posterity forever. I will make your posterity as the dust of the earth; if anyone can count the grains of dust, your posterity can also be counted. Arise, walk the length and breadth of the land, for to you I will give it.'[1]

It is possible but not certain that it was in virtue of this promise that Abraham was made the father of all nations. For there may be an allusion to this in the expression, 'I will make your posterity as the dust of the earth.' This, of course, is a figure of speech—a hyperbole, to use the Greek word—and is not to be taken literally. However, every reader of Scripture knows perfectly well how frequently this and other such figures of speech are there employed. Now, when this figure, the hyperbole, is used, what is said is a great exaggeration of what is meant. For, obviously, the number of particles of dust is incomparably greater than any possible

1 Gen. 13.8,9.

1 Gen. 13.14-17.

number of men from Adam to the end of time and, therefore, not only more than the posterity of Abraham in the sense of the people of Israel but even more than all who are and ever will be followers in his faith, in all the nations of the whole world. Actually, even this posterity is relatively small in comparison with the number of the wicked, even though, few as they are, they make up an uncounted multitude which, by hyperbole, can be compared to the 'dust of the earth.' Of course, when we say that an uncounted multitude is promised to Abraham, we mean uncounted by men, not by God, to whom even the number of the dust particles on earth is known.

It should be noticed that, since the comparison with the dust of the earth is more appropriate if we include not only the people of Israel but the whole progeny of Abraham's still more numerous spiritual sons, who are implied if the promise is taken in a spiritual sense, we may suppose that the promise here made was meant in both a material and a spiritual sense. However, the reason why I said that this is not clear from the text is that even the multitude of that one people sprung from Abraham, according to the flesh, through his grandson Jacob, has increased so greatly as to fill almost every region in the world. It is because even the number of this progeny is beyond man's power to count that it may, by a hyperbole, be compared to the number of particles of dust.

What is beyond doubt is that the only land meant is that which is called Chanaan. However, some may find a difficulty in the expression, 'I will give to you and your posterity for ever,' if the 'for ever' is taken to mean 'eternally.' There is no trouble if only they will take this 'for ever' to mean 'to the end of time,' which, as we hold on faith, is to be the beginning of eternity. And even though the Israelites have been driven from Jerusalem, they remain in other

cities of the land of Chanaan and will remain there to the end of time, and, when that whole land is occupied by Christians, they also are the seed of Abraham.

Chapter 22

Once Abraham had received this prophetical communication, he migrated and settled in another place in the same land, in Hebron, which is near the oak of Mambre. Now, when Sodom was attacked in the war of five kings against four and Lot was taken prisoner along with rest of the conquered people of Sodom, Abraham delivered him. At the head of 318 of his own men, Abraham brought victory to the kings of Sodom, but refused to take for himself any of the booty which was offered him by the victorious king. And it must have been at that moment that he was given the blessing by Melchisedech, who was 'a priest of the Most High God.'[1] This is the Melchisedech of whom so many remarkable things are said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was written, as most people think, by St. Paul—though there are some who deny this. What is important is that we have here, for the first time, the sacrifice which is now offered to God by Christians all over the world, and also the fulfillment of what, long after this event, was said in prophecy of Christ, whose incarnation was still in the future: 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.'[2] Note that it does not say: 'according to the order of Aaron,' for that order was to disappear in the shining of that Substance of which these shadows were but prophetic intimations.

1 Gen. 14.18.
2 Ps. 109.4.

Chapter 23

It was at that time, too, that a communication of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision. First, God promised that He would be his protector and his 'reward exceeding great.'[1] Then, wondering about his posterity, Abraham said that one of his servants, Eliezer, was to be his heir. Thereupon, he was promised that his heir would be one born of himself and not that household servant, and that his posterity would be as numerous not merely as the sands on the earth but as the stars in the sky. Here more than ever, so it seems to me, God's promise refers to a spiritual posterity in heavenly beatitude. For, as far as mere numbers go, the stars in the sky are fewer than the sands on the earth. The only point of the comparison would be that the stars, like the sands, are uncountable, on the supposition that many of the stars cannot be seen. At any rate, the closer one looks at the sky, the more stars can be seen and, therefore, it is a fair conclusion that some are unseen even by the sharpest vision—not to mention the stars which are said to rise and set on the far side of the globe. One last word; the authority of Scripture pays no attention to people like Aratus, Eudoxus, and the rest who pretend to have calculated and set down in writing the total number of stars.

It is in this passage of Scripture that we find the text quoted by Paul: 'Abraham believed the Lord, who credited the act to him as justice.'[2] This was a glorification of God's grace in comparison with circumcision, and a warning to those who would refuse to admit uncircumcised Gentiles into the faith of Christ. The point here is that, at the time when Abraham believed and his faith was reputed to him 'as justice,' he was not yet circumcised.

1 Cf. Gen. 15.1.
2 Gen. 15.6; Rom. 4.3.

Chapter 24

In the same vision, God added to what He has said: 'I am the God who brought thee out from the region of the Chaldaeans, to give thee this land and to inherit it.'[1] And when Abraham asked by what means he was to know that he was to possess it, God said to him: 'Take me a cow of three years, a she-goat of three years, and a ram of three years, a turtle also, and a pigeon. He took all these and divided them in the midst, and laid the two pieces of each one against the other; but the birds he divided not. And the fowls came down upon the carcasses, and Abram sat down in the midst of them. And when the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep; and terror came upon him and a great darkness. The Lord said to Abram: Know thou beforehand that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not their own, and they shall bring them under bondage and afflict them four hundred years. But I will judge that nation which they shall serve, and after this, they shall go free with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return hither; for as yet the iniquities of the Amorrhites are not at the full. And when the sun was setting, there arose a dark mist and there appeared a smoking furnace and a lamp of fire passing between those divisions. That day God made a covenant with Abram, saying: To thy seed will I give this land from the river of Egypt even to the great river Euphrates, the land of the Cineans, Cenezites, Cedmonites, Hethites, Pherezites, Raphaim, Amorrhites, Chanaanites, Gergesites and Jebusites.'[2]

1 Cf. Gen. 15.7.
2 Gen. 15.9-21.

All this was said and done in the vision granted by God, but it would take me too far beyond the scope of this work to discuss each point in detail. We need only notice what is relevant to our purpose, for example, that after Abraham believed God and, as we are told, this was reputed to him unto justice, it was not through any failure of faith that, after the possession of the land had been promised to him, he said: 'Lord God, whereby may I know that I shall possess it?'[3]

Notice that he does not say: 'From whom shall I know this?' as though he were still in doubt. Rather, he says: 'Whereby may I know?' as though hoping that some sign might be given to help him realize the reality which he had taken on faith. There was no more lack of faith here than when the Virgin Mary said: 'How shall this happen, since I do not know man?'[4] Mary was certain of the fact that it would happen, but she asked about the way in which it would take place. And when she asked this, she was given the answer.[5]

In the case of Abraham, an answer was given under the symbol of the animals, a cow, a she-goat, and a ram, and two birds, a turtle-dove and a pigeon. These symbols were meant to suggest the way in which the future event, of which he had now no doubt, would happen. Possibly, the cow was a symbol of his people put under the yoke of the law; the she-goat, of the people's future sinfulness; the ram, of their future realm. The animals were three years old to symbolize, perhaps, the three main epochs, first, from Adam to Noe, then, from Noe to Abraham, and, third, from Abraham to David who was the first to be made a king of the people of Israel, and this by the will of God after the rejection of

3 Gen. 15.8.
4 Luke 1.35.
5 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee' (Luke 1.35).

Saul. It was in the third of these periods, that from Abraham to David, that the people passed into the third period of life, that is to say, into full maturity.

Other interpretations of these animals may suggest themselves to others, but of one thing I feel sure, namely, that in the symbolism the addition of the turtle-dove and pigeon was prophetic of the future spiritual progeny of Abraham. The spiritual meaning of the words, 'but the birds he divided not,'[6] is that, although carnal people can be divided, this is by no means so of those who are spiritual, some of whom, like the dove, cut themselves off wholly from the busy affairs of the world, while others, like the pigeon, are content to remain in the world. But, as each of these birds is simple and without guile, so among the people of Israel who were to inherit the land there would be individual sons of the promise and heirs of that kingdom that is to continue even in eternal beatitude.

As to the fowls that 'came down upon the carcasses'[7] that were divided, they symbolize nothing that is good, but, rather, the spirits of the air seeking to prey on the division of carnal men. When Abraham 'sat down in the midst of them,'[8] this signifies that even in the midst of the divisions of carnal men true believers will continue to the end of time. The fear that fell on Abraham and 'the great darkness' that seized him are symbols of that great perturbation and tribulation of the faithful before the end of the world, about which our Lord says in the Gospel: 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning.'[9]

As to the words, 'Know for certain that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not their own, and they shall bring

6 Gen. 15.11.
7 *Ibid.*
8 Cf. Gen. 15.11. St. Augustine has *illis conseait* in place of the Vulgate, *abigebat eas Abram.*
9 Matt. 24.21.

them under bondage and afflict them four hundred years,'[10] they constitute a perfectly clear prophecy of the people of Israel that was to be in bondage in Egypt; not, of course, that the Egyptian bondage was to last 400 years, but that the bondage was to occur in the course of the 400 years. A parallel to this is what is said of Thare, the father of Abraham, namely: 'And the days of Thare in Haran were two hundred and five years.'[11] That does not mean that he spent all those years there, but that, while there, he reached that age. So, in the text mentioned, the reason for saying: 'they shall be subjected to slavery and shall be oppressed four hundred years' is that the period of years came to an end with the affliction, not that the affliction lasted that long.

The period is given in round numbers as 400, although is was somewhat longer, whether one reckons it from the time the promises were made to Abraham or from the birth of Isaac, who was the seed about which the predictions are made. Actually, as I said earlier, by calculating from the seventy-fifth year of Abraham, when the first of the promises was made, down to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, we get 430 years. This number is given by the Apostle in the text: 'Now I mean this: The Law which was made four hundred and thirty years later does not annul the covenant which was ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.'[12]

Thus, these 430 years could be said to be a round 400, since they were not much more, and, especially, because some of the 430 years were already past at the time the future was shown and told to Abraham in the vision; or, at any rate, at the time when Isaac was born in his father's hundreth year, which was twenty-five years after the first of the promises.

10 Gen. 15.13.
11 Cf. Gen. 11.32.
12 Gal. 3.17.

Taking away those twenty-five from the 430 would leave 405 or, as God chose to call it, 400.

The rest of what follows in God's prophecy pertains, as everyone would admit, to the people of Israel. There appear, however, toward the end, these words: 'And when the sun was setting, there arose a dark mist and there appeared a smoking furnace and a lamp of fire passing between those divisions.'[13] The allusion here is to the fact that, at the end of the world, carnal men are to be judged by fire. Notice the parallel. The unheard-of affliction of the City of God, which is to take place when Antichrist is in control, is symbolized by the darksome horror that seized upon Abraham; and 'when the sun was setting,' means when the end of the world is approaching. In the same way, 'when the sun had set' means when the end of the world has come; and by the fire is symbolized the day of judgment, dividing the carnal men who are to be saved by means of fire from those who are to suffer in the fire forever.

At the end comes the 'covenant with Abraham' which indicates the land of Chanaan by naming eleven of its tribes stretching from 'the river of Egypt' to the great river Euphrates. The 'river of Egypt' cannot be the great river, the Nile, but the small one which is the boundary between Egypt and Palestine, and on whose bank is the city of Rhinocorura.

Chapter 25

The next period is that of the sons of Abraham, one of them born of the bondwoman Agar, and the other of Sara,

13 Gen. 15.17.

who was free, both of whom I mentioned earlier.[1] In regard to this affair, we have no right whatever to brand Abraham as guilty of marital infidelity. First of all, his purpose was to beget an heir, not to indulge his passion; second, he was not flaunting but rather flattering his wife, whose idea it was that it would be some solace in her barrenness to achieve by choice what was impossible by nature, namely, to make her own the fertility of her handmaid's womb. For, it was her right as a wife, in virtue of the Apostle's words. 'the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife,'[2] to have another woman bear for her a child when she herself was barren. In this whole affair there is no lustful desire, no sinful obscenity. It is the wife who offers the maid to the husband for the sake of an heir; all the husband does is to accept the offer for this purpose. Neither wanted wilful pleasure, only the offspring that nature would give them.

The trouble began when the pregnant maid snubbed her barren mistress, and Sara, behaving like a jealous wife, blamed her husband rather than the maid. Abraham's only answer was: 'Your maid is in your power; do to her what seems good to you.'[3] It was an answer that proved that he had been no slave to passion but a master of himself in fathering the child; that in using Agar he had kept unstained his wedded troth to Sara, since there had been no pleasure of his that was not by her good pleasure; that what he wrought he had not sought; that the access had been without excess, the fathering without philandering.[4] Here is a man dealing with woman as a man should—restraint in regard to his wife, no

1 Cf., above, 15.3.
2 1 Cor. 7.4.
3 Gen. 16.6.
4 . . . *in Agar Sarrae coniugii pudicitiam custodisse nec voluptatem suam, sed voluntatem illius inplevisse; accepisse nec petisse, accessisse nec haesisse, seminasse nec amasse.*

taint in connection with the maid, giving to none any cause for complaint.[5]

Chapter 26

When in due course Ismael was born of Agar, Abraham might well have thought that this was the fulfillment of God's promise made when Abraham was thinking of adopting one of his family servants as an heir. God had said: 'He shall not be your heir; your heir shall be one of your own flesh.'[1] But to make it clear that His promise was not fulfilled in the son of the bondwoman, when Abraham 'was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said: I am God the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be perfect. I will make my covenant between you and me, and will multiply you exceedingly. Abram fell prostrate, and God spoke to him thus: 'This is my covenant with you. You shall be the father of a multitude of nations; you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; I will make nations of you and kings shall descend from you. I will establish my covenant between you and me and your descendants after you throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant, that I may be a God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give you and your descendants after you the land of your sojourning, all the land of Chanaan as a perpetual possession; and I will be their God.'

'God also said to Abraham: You shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant which you shall keep, between you

5 . . . *coniuge temperanter, ancilla obtemperanter, nulla intemperanter.*

1 Gen. 15.4.

and me and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; it shall be a token of the covenant between you and me. He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male throughout your generations, including the slave born in your house, or bought with money from any foreigner, not of your own race. Both he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money must be circumcised. My covenant shall be in your flesh as a perpetual covenant. If any male have not the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.

'God said to Abraham: Sarai your wife you shall not call Sarai but Sara. I will bless her, and will also give you a son by her; yes, I will bless her and she shall be the mother of nations; kings of peoples shall descend from her. And as Abraham fell prostrate, he laughed and said to himself: Shall a son be born to one who is a hundred years old? Shall Sara who is ninety bear a child? Then Abraham said to God: Oh, that Ismael may live in your favor! God answered: No, but Sara your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as a perpetual covenant for his descendants after him.

'As for Ismael, I have heard you. I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sara shall bear to you at this time next year.'[2]

This clarifies the promises concerning the vocation of the Gentiles through Isaac, the son of the promise, who is a symbol of grace as opposed to nature, in so far as the son promised is born of an old man and an old woman who is

2 Gen. 17.1-21.

barren. For, although God is the author even of the natural process of procreation, it is easier to discover His grace where His action is more obvious, as in a case where natural powers have been impaired or are utterly exhausted. It was because grace was later to come, not by generation, but by regeneration, that, at the time when a son to be born from Sara was promised, circumcision was enjoined. And the order to have all circumcised—not merely sons but servants and purchased slaves—was God's way of saying that His grace is open to all. For, what circumcision symbolizes is that something old is put off in order that a nature may be renewed. What the eighth day means is that Christ rose from the dead when the week was over, that is to say, on the day after the Sabbath. Notice, too, that there is change even in the names of the parents. Newness is the keynote throughout. It is the new covenant being foreshadowed in the old. The mere fact that we speak of an old covenant implies that there was a veil before the one that is new, just as what we call the new covenant takes away a veil to reveal the old. The laughter of Abraham is an exultation after triumph, not the derision of one who fears to fail. And those words which he spoke in his heart, 'shall a son be born to one who is a hundred years old? Shall Sara who is ninety bear a child?' were not said in diffidence but in admiration.

There may seem to be some difficulty in the words: 'I will give you and your descendants after you the land of your sojourning, all the land of Chanaan as a perpetual possession.' Has this been fulfilled or must we wait for the fulfillment? Certainly, no possession of land can be perpetual for any nation. The solution of the difficulty is that 'perpetual' is a translation of the Greek word *aiōnion,* which, in turn, is derived from *aiōn,* which means a period of time, a *saeculum* as the Latin has it. The Latin text preferred *aeterna* to

saecularis, which might imply a very different meaning. 'Secular' can be said of a period of human history that is relatively short, whereas *aiōnion,* 'perpetual,' can mean not only eternally without end but also lasting until the end of time.

Chapter 27

Another difficulty may be found in the interpretation of the text: 'If any male have not the flesh of his foreskin circumcised, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.'[1] There is here no fault in the child whose soul, it is said, is to perish, since it is not he who has broken God's covenant but his parents who neglected to have him circumcised. However, everyone—including even children —have broken God's covenant, not, indeed, in virtue of any personal action, but in virtue of mankind's common origin in that single ancestor in whom all have sinned.[2] For, there are, as any one may learn by reading Scripture, many other covenants of God in addition to the two main Testaments, the Old and the New. The first of all covenants is, of course, that which was made with the first man: 'For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.'[3] That is why we read in the book entitled Ecclesiasticus: 'All flesh grows old like a garment, for the covenant from the beginning is: Thou shalt die the death.'[4] Only later was the law made clearer as when the Apostle says: 'For where there is no law, neither is there transgression.'[5] Yet, what is said in the Psalm is true: 'I have reckoned as transgressors

1 Gen. 17.14.
2 Rom. 5.12,19.
3 Gen. 2.17.
4 Eccli. 14.18 (Septuagint).
5 Rom. 4.15.

all the sinners of the earth.'[6] We must take this to mean that all who are held responsible for any sin are guilty of the transgression of some law. That is why even children are born in sin, not, as the true faith teaches us, in actual personal sin, but in original sin, and hence need the grace, as we say in the Creed, of the forgiveness of sins. From all this it follows that, in the sense in which they are sinners, they are also accounted transgressors of that law which was made in the Garden of Eden. Thus, there is truth both in the psalm: 'I have reckoned as transgressors all the sinners of the earth,' and also in the words of the Apostle: 'For where there is no law, neither is there transgression.' Hence, if we remember, first, that circumcision was a symbol of regeneration, and, second, that because of the original sin by which God's first covenant was broken it was just for the child to be 'destroyed out of his people,' unless redeemed by regeneration, we can take the divine words to mean: Whoever has not been regenerated, that soul shall be destroyed out of his people, because, when he and all mankind sinned in Adam, he broke God's covenant. If God has said: 'Because he has broken this covenant of mine,' He would have left us no choice but to think that circumcision was meant. But, as it is, with no express mention of which covenant the child has broken, we are free to think of that covenant for the breaking of which the child could be held responsible.

If anyone persists in saying that the covenant here meant is the covenant of circumcision, because this is the covenant the child has broken by not being circumcised, then it is up to him to find some way of stating his case that will avoid the absurdity of meaning that, although the covenant was not broken by the child, nevertheless, it was he who broke it because it was broken in the child. Notice, however, that

6 Ps. 118.119 (Septuagint).

even in this interpretation of the text the child has no personal responsibility for the neglect, and that the only guilt that makes the destruction of his soul just is his implication in original sin.

Chapter 28

And so it was a great, unambiguous, and unmistakable promise that was made to Abraham in the words: 'I have made thee a father of many nations. And I will make thee increase exceedingly, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. .and I will give thee a son of Sara and I will bless him, and he shall become nations and kings of people shall spring from him.'[1] (This is a promise which, as we now see, has been fulfilled in Christ.) Now from the time this promise was made, the couple are no longer called in Scripture, as they were before, Abram and Sarai, but Abraham and Sara, as everyone now calls them. The reason given for the change of Abraham's name is, as God says, that 'I have made thee a father of many nations'—which, we must suppose, is what the name Abraham means; whereas his previous name, Abram, means 'lofty father.'

No reason is given for the change of Sara's name, but, according to those who have given us translations of the Hebrew names which appear in the Scripture, Sarai means 'my princess,' and Sara means 'power.' Hence we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'By faith even Sara herself who was barren, received power for the conception of a child.'[2] Both were old, as Scripture tells us, but she was also barren; in any case, had she not been so, she could have borne no child since the period of her monthly flux was past. Besides, even if a

1 Gen. 17.6,16.
2 Heb. 11.11.

woman of advanced age continues her menstruation and can conceive of a young man, she cannot do so of one who is old. Conversely, such an old man can beget of a younger woman, as, in fact, Abraham, after Sara was dead, begot children of Cetura, whom he found in the vigor of her womanhood.

Add to this that Abraham was, physically, 'as good as dead,'[3] and you see what the Apostle found to be miraculous, namely, that Abraham, at that advanced age, could beget a child of any woman who was so near the end of her capacity for motherhood. Of course, we must remember that a body 'as good as dead' is not wholly so; else, it is the corpse of a dead man, not the last condition of one who is alive. It is true that the usual solution of the difficulty about Abraham afterwards having children by Cetura is to say that the grace of begetting which was given by God continued even after the death of his wife. Personally, I prefer the solution I have followed because, true as it is that in our days no old man of a hundred years could beget a child from any woman whatsoever, nevertheless, it was different in those days, when men lived so long that not even a hundred years brought on decrepitude.

Chapter 29

There was another vision granted to Abraham at the oak of Mambre. God appeared in three men who were, undoubtedly, angels, although those who think that one of them was Christ the Lord say that He could be seen even before He put on the robe of flesh. Of course, it is not beyond the power and the invisible, immaterial, and immutable nature of God to appear, without a shadow of any intrinsic change,

3 Heb. 11.12.

to the eyes of man—not, indeed, as God is in Himself, but by means of something over which He has power. And what is there that is not in His power?

The argument for proving that one of the three was Christ is that Abraham, who saw the three, nevertheless spoke to the Lord in the singualr. The text runs: 'And when he raised his eyes he saw three men standing a distance from him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent door to meet them, and bowed down to the earth, and said: My Lord, If I find favor with you,' and so forth.[1] But why, then, do those who use this argument fail to notice that, while Abraham went on speaking to one of the three, calling him Lord and begging Him not to destroy the good along with the wicked in Sodom, the other two came to destroy the Sodomites and that when Lot welcomed them he also addressed the Lord in the singular while talking with the men. First he addressed them in the plural, thus: 'Come aside, my lords, into the house of your servant,' and so on. Yet, a little later we read: 'The visitors took him, his wife and his two daughters by the hand, through the mercy of the Lord toward him, and led him forth, and set him outside the city. When they had brought them forth, they said: Flee for your life; do not look behind you nor stop anywhere in the valley; flee to the hills, lest you perish. But Lot said to them: No, my lords; surely, your servant has found favor with you,' and so on.[2] After which, although the Lord was in the two angels, He replied to Lot in the singular, saying: 'I grant you this favor also,' and so on.

The conclusion is that it is far easier to believe that Abraham recognized the Lord in the three men and Lot in the two, and that both addressed God in the singular even when

1 Gen. 18.2,3.
2 Gen. 19.2,16-19.

they took the three appearances to be men. Certainly, their only reason for welcoming the appearances as they did was to minister to them as though they were men and in need of human refection. What is true is that there was something so lofty even in their human behavior that those who offered them hospitality could have no doubt that the Lord was in these men, as He is so often in His Prophets. This explains why, at times, the men themselves are addressed in the plural, while at other times God, who was in them, is addressed in the singular.

Actually, these men were angels, as is clear from the witness of Scripture not only here in the Book of Genesis where the episode is recorded but also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, in a sentence praising hospitality, it is said: 'Thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'[3]

It was by these three men that, at the time when another son, Isaac, was promised to Abraham, this time by Sara, no less a divine communication was given than the one in which it was promised: 'For Abraham shall surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.'[4] It is here that both aspects of God's promise are revealed, briefly, but in all their fullness: the people of Israel according to the flesh and the nations of the world according to faith.

Chapter 30

This promise was followed by the rescue of Lot from the Sodomites and the rain of fire from heaven which reduced

3 Heb. 13.2.
4 Gen. 18.18.

the whole territory of that wicked city to ashes. It was a place where the practice of unnatural lust had become as much sanctioned by custom as other forms of wickedness are elsewhere permitted by law. The point of their particular kind of punishment was that it provided a foretaste of the divine judgment to come, just as the command of the angels bidding those who were rescued not to look back was a reminder to us all, who hope to escape that ultimate doom, not to allow our wills to look back to the old life we put off when we put on the new life of grace. As for Lot's wife, who did look back and was turned into a pillar of salt, she has provided, for all who believe, a condiment, so to speak, to help them relish the wisdom of taking warning from her example.

After this, Abraham repeated, in relation to his wife and King Abimelech of Gerara, what he had done in Egypt, and, as before, Sara was restored to him with her virtue unsullied. It was on the occasion of the king's angry demand why Abraham had called Sara his sister, without a word about her being his wife, that Abraham was not merely frank in expressing his fears, but further explained: 'Howbeit, otherwise also she is truly my sister, the daughter of my father, and not the daughter of my mother.'[1] It was because she was Abraham's sister on her father's side that she was so near a relation, but her beauty was so striking that, old as she was, she could arouse men's passion.

Chapter 31

Next in order we have the birth of the son whom God had promised to Abraham by Sara. He was named Isaac,

1 Gen. 20.12.

which is Hebrew for 'laughter,' because his father had laughed, so full was he of wonder and joy, when the promise was made, and his mother also had laughed, in a mixed mood of doubt and delight, when the promise was repeated by means of the three men mentioned above. At the time, the angel first reproached her for a laughter of joy that was lacking in faith, but later confirmed her faith. And so it was that the boy was named Laughter. Once he was born and given that name, Sara proved how little there was in her laughter of scorn and derision and how much of gratitude and joy, for she said: 'God hath made a laughter for me. Whoever shall hear of it will laugh with me.'[1]

Shortly afterwards, Agar the maid, along with her son, was sent away from their home. We have the authority of the Apostle for saying that these two women are symbols of the two Testaments, the Old and the New, so that Sara is the symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is to say, of the City of God.

Chapter 32

Among other events which it would take too long to recall in detail, there was the testing of Abraham's obedience to God, in connection with the sacrifice of his much loved son, Isaac. The obedience was known to God, but it was proved in order to make it known to future ages. It is a reminder that not every trial is to be reckoned a temptation, but rather a probation, and, therefore, to be welcomed with joy. In fact, there is, normally, no other way for the human soul to attain self-knowledge than by giving an account of its powers, not to itself and in words, but in deed and to some temptation which, as it were, plays the part of a prosecutor. Nor is there here any danger of the inflation of petty vanity. On the

1 Gen. 21.6.

contrary, if the trial is accepted as a gift from God, the soul grows in devotion and is strengthened in grace.

Not for a moment, of course, could Abraham believe that God took delight in human sacrifices, although he knew that, once God's command rang out, it was his not to reason why, but to obey. What Abraham is to be praised for is his faith in the immediate resurrection of his son as soon as the sacrifice was over—faith in God's promise, given when Abraham refused to yield to his wife in the matter of casting out the maid-servant and her son: 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.'[1]

There is, certainly, a difficulty in the words that follow: 'But I will make also the son of the bondwoman a great nation, because he is thy seed.' How could God call Ismael 'thy seed,' after he had said: 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called'? The Apostle solves this difficulty in his comment on the words, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' He says: 'That is to say, they are not sons of God who are the children of the flesh, but it is the children of the promise who are reckoned as posterity.'[2] Thus, for the sons of promise to be the seed of Abraham, they are 'called in Isaac,' in the sense that they are gathered together in Christ by means of the call of grace.

It was to this promise, therefore, that the father, inspired by faith, held firm, because it was to be fulfilled by him whom God commanded to be slain. That is why he had no doubt that the boy who could be given him after his own hope was dead could be given back to him after the boy himself was dead.[3]

This, in fact, is the way the matter is understood and explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'By faith Abraham,

1 Gen. 21.12.
2 Rom. 9.8.
3 . . . *non hesitavit, quod sibi reddi poterat immolatus, qui dari potuit non speratus.*

when he was put to the test, offered Isaac; and he who had received the promises (to whom it had been said, 'In Isaac thy seed shall be called') was offering up his only-begotten son, reasoning that God has power to raise up even from the dead.'

Thereupon follow the words: 'Whence also he received him back as a type.'[4] As a type of whom?—unless of Him of whom the Apostle says: 'He who has not spared even his own Son but has delivered him for us all.'[5] This explains why Isaac himself, just like the Lord carrying His cross, carried to the place of sacrifice the wood on which he was to be placed. One last symbol: Isaac was not to be killed, once his father was forbidden to strike. That is why the ram was there, so that by its offering the sacrifice was completed in symbolic blood.

Note that when Abraham first saw the ram it was caught by its horns in a thicket of briers. This, surely, is a symbol of Jesus, crowned with thorns by the Jews before he was immolated.

However, it is better for us to listen to the words of God spoken through the angel. For the Scripture says: 'Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to kill his son. But an angel of the Lord called to him from heaven: Abraham, Abraham! He answered: Here I am. He said: Do not lay a hand on the boy; do nothing to him. I know now that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.'[6]

The 'now I know' means 'now I have made it known,' for God was not without this knowledge up to that point. Then the ram was offered up in the place of Isaac, his son, and, as

4 Heb. 11.17-19.
5 Rom. 8.32.
6 Gen. 22.10-12,14.

Scripture tells us: 'Abraham called the name of that place, The Lord seeth. Whereupon even to this day it is said: In the mountain the Lord will see.' And just as the 'now I know' meant 'now I have made it known,' so, here, 'The Lord seeth' means 'the Lord appeared' or 'the Lord let Himself be seen.' 'Again the angel of the Lord called from heaven to Abraham and said: I swear by myself, says the Lord, since you have done this and have not withheld your only son, I will indeed bless you, and will surely multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, as the sands on the seashore. Your descendants shall possess the gates of their enemies. In your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'[7]

Thus it is that, after the holocaust, in which Christ is symbolized, the promised vocation of the Gentiles in the seed of Abraham is confirmed by nothing less than an oath of God. Never before had God sworn, though He had made many promises. When the true God, who can speak only the truth, takes an oath, this must imply not only a confirmation of His promise but a kind of reproach for those who lack faith.

After this, Sara, in the 127th year of her life and the 137th of her husband's, died. That he was ten years older we learn from what he said when a son by her was promised to him: 'Shall a son be born to one who is a hundred years old? Shall Sara who is ninety bear a child?'[8] Then Abraham bought a field, and there he buried his wife. Next, according to the account given by Stephen, Abraham first settled in that land in the sense of taking full possession of it. This means after the death of his father, which can be calculated to have taken place two years earlier.[9]

7 Gen. 22.15-18.
8 Gen. 17.17.
9 The data for the calculation can be found in Genesis 11, 12, 17 and 23.

Chapter 33

When Isaac was forty years old, that is, when his father was in his 140th year and in the third year after his mother's death, he married Rebecca, the granddaughter of Nachor. To accompany her from Mesopotamia, a servant was sent by Isaac's father, who said to the servant: 'Put your hand under my thigh that I may adjure you by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, not to obtain a wife for my son from the women of the Chanaanites.'[1] This surely was prophetic of the fact that the Lord God of heaven and the Lord of the earth would one day come in flesh fashioned from that thigh; nor are such signs of small account seeing that they are prophetic of the truth which, as we can see, has been fulfilled in Christ.

Chapter 34

What is the meaning of the fact that, after Sara's death, Abraham married Cetura? Certainly, there is no question of mere passion in a man of his age, holiness, and faith, nor of any thought of needing to father other children, seeing how tested was his faith in God's promise that from Isaac would issue a progeny comparable in number to the stars of heaven and the sands on earth. Of course, it might be argued that, as Agar and Ismael were symbols of the carnal people of the old covenant—and for this we have the authority of the Apostle—so Cetura and her sons may symbolize the no less earthly minded people who imagine they belong to the new covenant. At any rate, while Sara is never called a concubine, both Agar and Cetura are referred to not only as wives but

1 Gen. 24.2,3.

as concubines. For example, when Agar was offered to Abraham, the Scripture says: 'After Abraham had lived ten years in the land of Chanaan, Sarai his wife took Agar, her Egyptian maid, and gave her to Abram, her husband to be his wife.'[1] So, too, with Cetura. When Abraham took her after Sara's death, it is said: 'Abraham married another wife whose name was Cetura.'[2] Thus we see that both are called wives. Yet, as we see later in the Scripture, both are revealed as concubines: 'Abraham gave Isaac everything he had. Abraham gave presents to his children by his concubines, and while yet alive sent them away eastward, to the land of the East, apart from Isaac.'[3] Thus, the sons of the concubines receive some gifts but do not reach the promised kingdom; and the same applies to heretics and to carnal-minded Jews. There is no heir but Isaac: 'Through Isaac shall thy posterity bear thy name. That is to say, they are not sons of God who are the children of the flesh, but it is the children of promise who are reckoned as a posterity.'[4]

Apart from this mystery, which she symbolizes, I cannot see on what account Cetura is also called a concubine; after all, Abraham married her after Sara was dead.

As for those who prefer to read no symbolic meanings into such facts, they still have no ground of complaint against Abraham. For, in the literal sense, there may be meant to be here an argument against those heretics who are opposed to second marriages, since the example of the very father of many nations proves that there is no sin in a second marriage which is made after one's wife is dead.

Abraham died when he was 175 years old.[5] Thus, his son

1 Gen. 16.3.
2 Gen. 25.1.
3 Gen. 25.5,6.
4 Rom. 9.7,8.
5 Cf. Gen. 25.7. The MSS. have 170.

Isaac was left as a man of seventy-five, since he was born when Abraham was 100 years old.

Chapter 35

We must now take a look at the history of the City of God, as it takes its course from this point on among the descendants of Abraham. In the period from Isaac's birth to his seventieth year, when his first children were born, there is one memorable fact. He used to ask God that his wife, who was barren, might bear him a child. God heard the prayer and she conceived twins who leapt while still in her womb. She was troubled by the disturbance and, asking the Lord, she received this answer: 'Two nations are in your womb; two people shall stem from your body. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.'[1]

This is interpreted by the Apostle Paul as an obvious proof of the working of grace: 'For before the children had yet been born or had done ought of good or evil,'[2] the younger was chosen, through no merits of his own, and the older rejected. So far as original sin goes, both were equal; as for personal sins, neither had any. However, it is not possible within the plan of this work to pursue here a matter which I have dealt with at length elsewhere. One word, however, on the expression, 'the elder shall serve the younger.' Practically every Christian has taken this to mean that the 'elder' people, the Jews, will serve the 'younger' people, the Christians. Now, certainly, it is true that there seems to be a possible fulfillment of this in the Idumaeans who are de-

1 Gen. 25.23.
2 Rom. 9.11.

scendants of the elder (who was called both Esau and Edom, whence Idumaeans) and who were destined to be overcome by a people that sprang from the younger, namely, the people of Israel, and to be subject to them. Nevertheless, it surely is better to believe that there is something of greater significance in the prophecy: 'One people shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.' And can this be anything else than what is manifestly fulfilled in the Jews and Christians?

Chapter 36

Such a communication as his father more than once received, Isaac also received, and of this communication we read: 'Now another famine occurred in the land, besides the earlier famine of the days of Abraham. And Isaac went away to Gerara, to Abimelech, king of the Philistines. The Lord appeared to him and said: Do not go down into Egypt, but dwell in the land which I shall point out to you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you; for I will give all these lands to you and your descendants. I will fulfill the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the heavens. I will give your descendants all these lands, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; for Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my precepts and commandments and observed my ceremonies and laws.'[1]

Isaac is a patriarch who had no second wife, nor any concubine, but was content with the twins who were the fruit of a single intercourse. He, too, had the same fears as his father of the perilous beauty of his wife when he lived among strangers and he, too, called her sister without a word about

1 Gen. 26.1-5.

her being his wife, since, in fact, she was nearly related both on the paternal and the maternal side. And she, too, was safe, once it was known that she was his wife. Not, however, that we should esteem him higher than his father for knowing no woman other than his single wife; undoubtedly, the merits of his father's faith and obedience were so much greater that it was because of the father that God was so good to the son. 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because,' says God, 'Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my precepts and commandments and observed my ceremonies and laws.'[2] And in another communication God says: 'I am the God of your father Abraham; fear not, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.'[3]

These words were meant, first, to teach us to see the degree of Abraham's virtue even in what seems like lust to the eyes of the impure and to those who try to justify their own wickedness by what they find written in the Scriptures; and, second, to let us learn not to compare people on the basis of particular virtues but to take them in their entirety. For, it is not enough for a man to excel another in one good point of his life and character even though this virtue in itself is higher than the virtues in which the other man excels. For example, continence as such is better than wedlock, yet, by any sound and true criterion, a married Christian is better than a celibate pagan, for the simple reason that a man who lacks faith is not merely to be less esteemed but must be completely abhorred. Or take the case where both men are good. Even here, a married man of very great faith who is most obedient to God is certainly better than a continent one who

2 Gen. 26.4,5.
3 Gen. 26.24.

has less of faith and obedience. Of course, other things being equal, no one hesitates to prefer the continent man to the one who is married.

Chapter 37

Isaac's twin sons, Esau and Jacob, next grow up together. The birthright of the elder is transferred to the younger in virtue of a mutually accepted pact. So unrestrained was the passion of the elder for the lentil broth which the younger had prepared for a meal that he sold his birthright in exchange for his brother's broth and confirmed the deal with an oath. One lesson from this is that what makes a person guilty at table is not the quality of his food but his unbridled greed.

Isaac grows old and by reason of age loses his eyesight. Intending to bless the twin who was older, he unwittingly blesses the younger instead. The older brother's skin was covered with hair, but the younger, disguising himself in goat's skins, placed himself below the paternal hands as though he were a scapegoat bearing away the sins of others.

This trick on the part of Jacob may easily be mistaken for fraudulent guile, if we fail to see in it the mysterious intimation of a great reality. That is why the Scripture prepares us by the word: 'Esau became a skilful hunter, and a husbandman; but Jacob a simple man living at home.'[1] Some translators have 'guileless' in place of 'simple.' But, whether we say 'guileless' or 'simple' or 'without pretense' for the Greek *áplastos* there can be no real guile in getting this blessing, since the man himself is guileless. There can be no guile in a simple man, no pretense where a man does not lie. What, in

1 Cf. Gen. 25.27.

fact, we have here is a mysterious intimation of a profound truth.[2]

What, then, is the nature of the blessing itself? The father says: 'The fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field which the Lord has blessed! God gave you dew from heaven, and fruitfulness of the earth, abundance of grain and wine. Let nations serve you, peoples bow down to you. Be master of your brothers; may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, blessed be those who bless you.'[3]

What the blessing of Jacob typifies is, then, the preaching of Christ to all nations. This is the fact that really matters.[4] Isaac is the law and prophecy by which Christ is blessed by means of the mouth of the Jews. But, since law and prophecy was not understood, it was as though it came from one who spoke in ignorance. It is with the aroma of Christ's name that the world, like a field, is filled. His is the blessing of the dew from heaven (meaning the shower of His divine words) and of the fruitfulness of the earth (in the sense of the gathering in of the peoples of the earth). His is the harvest of grain and of wine (interpreted as the multitude of those who gather the grain and wine in the sacrament of His Body and Blood.) It is He whom the peoples serve and princes worship. He is the lord of His brother, because it is His people who rule over the Jews; and His Father's sons, in the sense of the sons of Abraham according to faith, adore Him who is, in turn, a son of Abraham according to the flesh. Anyone who curses Him is cursed, and anyone who blesses Him is blessed. What I mean is that it is our Christ who is blessed (in the sense of being truly announced) even by the Jews

2 *Quis est dolus simplicis, quae fictio non mentientis, nisi profundum mysterium veritatis?*
3 Gen. 27.27-29.
4 *Hoc fit, hoc agitur.*

themselves, who, for all their errors of hoping for some other Messias and of thinking that it is he who is being blessed, still sing in their synagogues the Laws and the Prophets.

Isaac is full of fear when the older twin also begs for the promised blessing and Isaac realizes that he has given the blessing to someone else instead. He wonders, and asks who this other can be. But, notice that Isaac makes no complaint that he has been deceived. On the contrary, the moment the great mystery is unveiled within his heart, he masters his indignation and confirms the blessing: 'Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? Before you came I ate heartily and then blessed him.'[5]

Now, surely, if those happenings were of merely natural and not of supernatural inspiration, what could anyone have expected here but a burst of angry malediction? All this, indeed, is history, but it is also prophecy; it happens on earth, but heaven directs it; men are the agents, but God inspires them. When facts are so full of mysterious meaning, it would take volumes to discuss the details. But the limits set for this work force me to hurry on to other matters.

Chapter 38

Jacob was sent by his parents to Mesopotamia to get himself married, and these are the parting words of his father: 'Do not marry any Chanaanite woman; go then to Phaddan-aram, the home of Bathuel, your mother's father, and there choose your wife from the daughters of your uncle Laban. May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful; may he multiply you so that you may become many nations. May he bestow on you, and your descendants also, the bless-

5 Gen. 27.33.

ing of Abraham that you may inherit the land of your sojourning which God gave to Abraham.'[1]

It is here that we already perceive the division made between the two progenies of Isaac, the one descended from Jacob and the other from Esau. It is the progeny which becomes the City of God that is alluded to in the words: 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called,'[2] and from this was distinguished the other progeny of Abraham descended from the son of the bondwoman and continued in the sons of Cetura. But it was still in doubt when Isaac's twins were born whether the 'blessing of Abraham' was meant for both or only for one of the twins, and, if so, for which. It is this which is now made clear when Jacob is given a prophetic blessing by his father in the words: 'Thou shalt be a multitude of people. And may God give to thee the blessings of Abraham.'[3]

During the journey to Mesopotamia, Jacob received in a dream the communication of which Scripture speaks as follows: 'Meanwhile, Jacob left Bersabee and journeyed toward Haran. He came to a place where he spent the night because the sun had set. He took one of the stones of the place, put it under his head, and went to sleep there. He dreamed that a ladder was set up on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; angels of God were ascending and descending on it. The Lord stood beside him and said: I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you lie. They shall be as the dust of the earth. You shall spread abroad to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south; in you and your descendants, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. I will be with you and protect you wherever you go.

1 Gen. 28.1-5.
2 Gen. 21.12.
3 Cf. Gen. 28.3,4.

I will bring you back to this land; indeed I will not forsake you till I fulfill my promise.

'When Jacob woke from his sleep he said: Truly the Lord is in this place and I did not know it. Reverently he continued: How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven! Jacob arose in the morning, took the stone which he had placed under his head, set it up as a memorial pillar and poured oil over it. He called the place Bethel.'[4]

Again, this is not mere history but prophecy. Certainly, Jacob did not pour oil on the stone as though he were an idolater making it a god. Nor did he worship the stone by offering it sacrifice. The important point is that the name Christ is derived from *chrisma,* which means 'anointing with oil,' and, therefore, what we have here is a symbol with a great and mysterious meaning.

As for the ladder, no one less than our Saviour Himself recalls this to mind in the passage of the Gospel where He spoke of Nathanael: 'Behold a true Israelite in whom there is no guile.'[5] It was Israel who had seen the vision, since Jacob is Israel, and the passage continues: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

And so Jacob continued as far as Mesopotamia, where he was to get a wife. Actually, as the Scripture points out, without any illicit desire on his part, he came to know four women and by them became the father of twelve sons and one daughter. It is true he had come for one wife only, but a second one was substituted for her. Once he had relations with this substitute without realizing her identity, he did not

4 Gen. 28.10-20. The 'well of the oath' is Bersabee and the 'house of God' is Bethel.
5 John 1.47.

send her away, lest he seem to have dishonored her. Besides, in those days, when there was need of multiplying posterity, there was no law against polygamy. So, he took both her and also the one to whom he had pledged his troth. Now, this wife was barren, and so she gave her handmaid to her husband to bear children in her place. And the older sister, who had already had children of her own, imitated her sister's example, for the sake of multiplying offspring. There is no indication in Scripture that Jacob had wanted more than one wife or that he had any other purpose in his other relations but to fulfill his duty of having children. Nor would he have done this, although it was within his married rights, unless the wives themselves had insisted on it, urging their legitimate authority over their husband's body. Thus it came about that with four wives Jacob became the father of twelve sons and one daughter.

Some time later, through the mediation of his son Joseph, he betook himself to Egypt. Joseph it was who had been sold by his brothers who were envious of him. He had been taken off to Egypt, but there rose to a high place.

Chapter 39

As I just mentioned, Jacob was also called Israel, which became the special name assumed by the people descended from him. It was the name given to him by the angel who wrestled with Jacob during the return journey from Mesopotamia. This angel was another manifest symbol of Christ. Actually, Jacob wins the victory over the angel who willingly submitted to defeat. This, of course, dramatizes a mystery. It is a foreshadowing of Christ's passion, in which the Jews are the seeming victors over Christ. Victor as he was, Jacob

begged a blessing of the angel, and it was the imposition of his name that was the blessing. The word Israel means 'seeing God'—which is to be the ultimate reward of all who are holy. When Jacob was winning his seeming victory, the angel touched the sinew of his thigh and thus made him lame, the result being that Jacob was both blessed and lame—blessed in those among his progeny who believed in Christ and lame in those who refused to believe. It is the multitude of this latter class which is symbolized by the breadth of the sinew, for, in fact, it was of the majority of the people of Israel that it was foretold in prophecy: 'And they limped away from their path.'[1]

Chapter 40

According to the account given, there were seventy-five persons who entered Egypt, counting Jacob along with his children. There were two women only, one a daughter and the other a granddaughter. The difficulty is that on the day and in the year when Jacob entered Egypt a careful calculation shows that there was no such number of souls in his family. A further difficulty is that the number includes great-grandchildren of Joseph who could not possibly have been born at that time. The reason for this is that Jacob was then 130 years old and his son Joseph thirty-nine; since it is known that Joseph was already thirty or more when he married, it is difficult to see how, in nine years, he could have grandchildren born of his children by that wife. And since Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasses, were boys under nine when Jacob entered Egypt and were not even fathers, how can their sons and grandsons find a place in the list of the seventy-five in Jacob's company? Nevertheless, the list in-

1 Cf. Ps. 17.46.

cludes the names of Machir, the son of Manasses, Joseph's grandson; and also Galaad, who was Machir's son and Manasses' grandson and Joseph's great-grandson; Utalaam, the son of Joseph's other son, Ephraim; and Edem, son of Utalaam and grandson of Ephraim and great-grandson of Joseph. Now, it is quite impossible that any of these were in existence when Jacob came into Egypt and found that his grandsons who were Joseph's sons and the reputed grandfathers of Machir and the rest were themselves boys not yet nine years old.

The solution[1] is that the entrance was not effected on one day or in one year, but was a continuous process in which the seventy-five mentioned in Scripture entered at different dates throughout the whole period of the life of Joseph, by whose means it was that the entrance was made possible. For, notice that it is of Joseph that the same Scripture says: 'Joseph remained in Egypt with all his father's household. He lived one hundred and ten years. He saw Ephraim's children to the third generation.'[2] This means his great-grandson, since the third generation implies a son, a grandson, and the great-grandson who is 'the third from' Ephraim. Thereupon, we read: 'The children also of Machir the son of Manasses were born on Joseph's kneess.'

'Children' here mean the grandson of Manasses and great-grandson of Joseph. The plural is used as is often the case in Scriptural usage, as when the one daughter of Jacob is called 'daughters.' It is the same in the Latin use of *liberi,* 'children,' even where there is only a single child in the family.

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1 The real difficulty is that St. Augustine was using a translation of the Septuagint which gives the number seventy-five (instead of seventy) in Gen. 46.27 and which inserts the names of Machir and the others in Gen. 46.20.

2 Gen. 50.22,23.

When, therefore, mention is made of Joseph's own happiness because he lived to see his great-grandchildren, there is no need whatever to think that they were already born in the thirty-ninth year of their great-grandfather Joseph, which is the year when his father Jacob came to Egypt. What, however, is misleading to any one who does not carefully examine the matter is that we read the words: 'These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his descendants, who migrated to Egypt.'[3]

This does not mean that all the seventy-five were with him when he entered Egypt, but they are enumerated along with him merely because the 'entrance' covers the whole period during which Joseph, who seems to have made the entrance possible, was living in Egypt.

Chapter 41

It is because the City of God in its present earthly pilgrimages is found in the people of Christ that we are tracing the genealogy of Christ. Beginning with Abraham and neglecting the sons of his concubines, we come to Isaac; in the line of Isaac, by passing over Esau (also called Edom), we reach Jacob (also called Israel); in the line of Israel, passing over other sons, we come to Juda; and it was from the tribe of Juda that Christ sprang. It is for this reason that we must hear how Israel in Egypt, when he was about to die, blessed his sons and in doing so pronounced a prophetic blessing over Juda: 'Juda thy brethren shall praise thee; thy hand shall be on the neck of thy enemies; the sons of thy father shall bow down to thee. Juda is a lion's whelp; from the prey thou hast gone up, my son. Resting thou hast

3 Gen. 46.8.

couched as a lion and as a lioness; who shall rouse him? A leader shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh till those things come that are laid up for him, and he shall be the expectation of the nations. Tying his foal to the vine, and his ass's colt to the choicest vine, he shall wash his robe in wine, his garment in the blood of the grape. His eyes are red from wine, his teeth whiter than milk.'[1]

In my work *Against Faustus the Manichaean,*[2] I have commented on these words sufficiently, I think, to make the truth of this prophecy clear. In the word 'couched' we have a prediction of the death of Christ; in the expression, 'as a lion,' we see the death as being by the power of choice and not of necessity. This is the power of choice which He Himself speaks of in the Gospel: 'I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again.'[3] And what He said, like a lion 'roused' from sleep, He fulfilled, for there is a reference to His power in the prediction of His Resurrection contained in the words: 'Who shall rouse him.' They imply the answer: 'No man, but only He Himself who said of His body: "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." '[4] In the preceding words, 'thou art gone up,' we can see foretold the kind of death He suffered high on the Cross. In the next words, 'Resting thou hast couched,' we have predicted what the Evangelist describes in the words: 'And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.'[5] Or if not this, then certainly the reference is to His burial, for in the tomb He rested sleeping, and from it He rose as from sleep. No man raised Him,

1 Gen. 49.8-12.
2 *Contra Faustum Manichaeum.*
3 John 10.17,18.
4 John 2.19.
5 John 19.30.

as Prophets have raised some men and as He himself raised others. 'He shall wash his robe in wine' is a prediction that He cleanses from sin in His blood, the mysterious power of which blood is known to those who are baptized. Hence, too, the words that follow: 'and his garment in the blood of the grape.' What is this 'garment' but the Church? And 'his eyes are red from wine' means that these eyes full of His spirit have been inebriated by His chalice, of which the Psalmist sings: 'And thy chalice that inebriates, how excellent it is.'[6] The following words, 'his teeth whiter than milk,' anticipate what the Apostle says of Christ: 'I fed you with milk,' meaning the nourishing words given to the 'little ones in Christ' who were not yet ready for solid food.

It is Christ, in whom the promises were made to Juda provisionally so that, 'until He came that is to be sent,' there would never be lacking in the race of Israel princes in the sense of kings of Israel. 'And he shall be the expectation of the nations' is too clear to the reader to call for any explanation.

Chapter 42

We have seen that the two sons of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, were prophetic symbols of two peoples, the Jews and the Christians, although in terms of physical genealogy it was not the Jews but the Idumeans who were descended from Esau, and it was the Jews rather than the Christians who came from Jacob. Strictly speaking, it is only in regard to the text, 'The elder shall serve the younger,' that the symbolic application holds. Now, there is a similar symbolic foreshadowing of Jews and Christians in the two sons of Joseph, the elder being a type of the former and the younger

6 Cf. Ps. 22.5.

of the latter. Jacob blessed the two boys, but in doing so he held his right hand above the younger who was at his left and his left hand over the elder who was on the right. This caused some concern to Joseph, and to correct the mistake he pointed out to Jacob which of the sons was the elder. Jacob, however, refused to change the position of his hands, but said: 'I know, my son, I know. He too shall become a people; he too shall be great; but his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.'[1]

What Jacob is here doing is to point to the two famous promises. For, one of the sons is to be the father of a 'people' and the other of a 'multitude of nations,' and nothing could be clearer than that these two promises refer to the people of Israel and the whole world filled with the sons of Abraham, the 'people' being sons according to the flesh and 'the multitude of nations' being sons according to the faith.

Chapter 43

Jacob died; then Joseph. During the 144 years that remained before the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt, the population increased incredibly in spite of devastating persecutions. At one time, every male child that was born was put to death, so terrified were the astonished Egyptians by the extraordinary increase of the Jewish population. It was then that Moses was snatched by stealth from the hands of the executioners and found a home in the royal palace, for God's providence had great things for him to do. He was nursed and adopted by a daughter of Pharao—all kings in Egypt were named Pharao. So great a hero did Moses be-

1 Gen. 48.19.

come that he freed his people from the yoke of slavery, or, rather, God wrought through him what He had promised to Abraham. It was a hard and heavy yoke, yet the people increased marvelously. It is true that, at first, Moses fled because, to defend an Israelite, he had killed an Egyptian and was afraid, but later God told him to return, and in the power of the Spirit of God he overcame the magicians of Pharao who attempted to oppose him. When the Egyptians continued to refuse to free the people of God, ten memorable afflictions were sent by God to afflict the Egyptians—water changed to blood, the frogs and lice and flies, the dying cattle, boils and hail storms, the locusts, darkness, and the death of first-born children. At last, the spirit of the Egyptians was broken by so many grievous afflictions and the Israelites were freed. However, some Egyptians pursued them, and these perished in the Red Sea. The waters opened to leave a path for the departing Israelites, but, when the Egyptians followed them, the waters returned and drowned the Egyptians. After this, for forty years the people wandered in the desert with Moses as their leader. The Law was promulgated in a terrifying way on the mountain, with its divine origin revealed by miraculous signs and voices. The place where God was worshiped with sacrifices prophetic of what was to come was thereupon called the Tabernacle of Testimony.

This occurred soon after the departure from Egypt, when the people were beginning their wanderings in the desert, on the fiftieth day after the Pasch was celebrated by the sacrifice of a lamb. Not only is this lamb a perfect symbolic prophecy of Christ passing, through the sacrifice of His passion, from this world to the Father—I need hardly recall that *pascha* is the Hebrew for 'passing,'—but in the period of the revelation of the New Covenant, it was on the fiftieth day after Christ our Pasch was offered up in the sacrifice that

the Holy Spirit came down from heaven. Note, too, that this Spirit is called in the Gospel the Finger of God: first, because He directs us to recall to memory events first enacted in prophetic symbols, and, second, because the Tablets of the Law are said to have been written by the finger of God.

After the death of Moses, the people were ruled by Josue, son of Nun, and it was he who led them into the promised land and who divided the land among the people. Both these marvelous leaders were highly successful in war. In these there was an element of the miraculous, since, as God made clear, the victories were less in reward for any merits of the Jewish people than in punishment of the sins of the people who were conquered.

After these leaders came the Judges. The people by now were settled in the promised land and the first promise made to Abraham, which has reference to one people, namely, the Hebrews, and to the land of Chanaan began to be fulfilled. There was no question yet, of course, of the promise in reference to all peoples and the whole world, since that was to be fulfilled by the coming of Christ in the flesh and by the faith revealed in the Gospel rather than by any observances of the old Law. And it was as a foreshadowing of this that is was not by Moses (who received on Mount Sinai the Law for the people) but by Josue (whose name was changed into Jesus at God's command) that the people were brought into the promised land.

The wars that were fought while the Judges were in authority were sometimes won and sometimes lost, depending on the sins of the people and the mercy of God.

The next period is that of the Kings. The first to reign was Saul. He was deposed and defeated in battle, and his heirs were rejected as candidates for the crown. So David succeeded, and it is as Son of David that Christ is most com-

monly known. With David begins the period of mature manhood in the history of God's people, following the period of adolescence, so to speak, which lasted from Abraham to David. It was not without reason that Matthew in his Gospel so lists the steps in the genealogy from Abraham to David that this first period includes fourteen generations. For it is in the period of adolescence that procreation becomes possible. Hence, the generations are made to begin with Abraham, who was declared the father of the nations when he was given his new name. Thus we may say that before Abraham the people of God were in their childhood from Noe to Abraham, the period in which they were identified by their speaking the Hebrew language.[1] For, a human being begins to speak in childhood, the age following infancy—which is derived from the Latin, *infans,* meaning unable to speak. Infancy is a period the memory of which is lost, much as all memory of the infancy of the human race was lost in the flood. For, how many persons are there who can remember their infancy?

I am here tracing the history of the City of God. Just as the previous Book dealt with one age, the first, so the present Book may be thought of as covering two ages, the second and third. In this third age the yoke of the Law was imposed (foreshadowed by the 'cow of three years'[2]); second, sin began to abound (symbolized by the 'she-goat of three years'); third, the earthly kingdom took its rise (as indicated by the 'ram of three years'). It was a period in which men living according to the spirit were not lacking (as was mysteriously foretold under the symbol of the turtle-dove and the pigeon).

1 . . . *pueritia* . . . *populi Dei* . . . *in ea lingua inventa est, id est Hebraea.*

2 Gen. 15.9. Cf. St. Augustine's handling of the symbolism of the cow, the she-goat, the ram, the turtle-dove and the pigeon in Chapter 24, above.